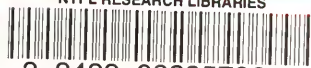


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NOTIONS







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THE COUNCILORS RETURN TO THE PALACE WITH THEIR REPORTS. (SEE PAGE 148.)

IMAGINATIONS

TRUTHLESS TALES

BY

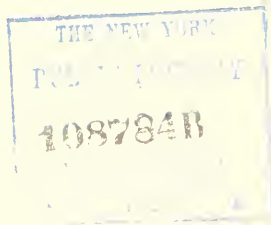
TUDOR JENKS



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

1894

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IMAGINOTIONS

geology that this document is perhaps the oldest in existence. Indeed, the university has conferred upon the professor a purple ribbon to wear on Sundays in recognition of this remarkable discovery. I will add only that the old papyrus which contained the story was found with others in a stone chest upheaved during an earthquake in Asia Minor.

Thus runs the story :

Came rumors and sayings to the sharp ear of the ruler, who gave orders to the swordbearer and bowmen to betake them to the cave of the image-maker, and, having laid hands upon him, to walk him quickly to the ruler's house.

But he of the sword did shake in his sandal-straps, and his hair did point skyward, while his teeth tapped together ; for the image-maker was known to be a wizard and talker with the winds. Before then no one had dared so much as to throw a rock at the cave-dweller.

The ruler turned his eye upon the swordbearer and saw his fright. Yet the ruler said no word, for he loved his people, and knew that the wizard must be taken. Rather would he have sent his whole army one by one to come out no more from the darkness of the dread cave than that harm should come to himself or to his people, for he had the heart of a dinosaur, one of the green kind. [NOTE : The professor insists this is right, but I think the adjective plainly refers to the apteryx, which was of a dusky emerald color when enraged.]

The swordbearer, having taken a damp farewell, gathered the bowmen and went toward the rising sun ; but his heart was cold. When the fourth pinkness of dawning dyed the sky, came black figures against the blue at the ending of the earth where rises the world-lighter, and before the gong for the morning meal had thrice

been rung to waken the sleep-loving-in-the-morning ruler, the sword-bearer came bringing the wicked wizard.

The wizard carried a chest or coffer, black, and covered close with hide, but having a dull eye at one end, and knobs and round trimmings, wrought curiously and of strange magic and witchery. [NOTE: Evidently the primitive camera, with the usual buttons.]

When the day was strong, arose the ruler, and ate half a zebra with trilobite sauce.

Then did I, his scribe, tell him humbly that the wizard awaited him.

“Where is my spear and my sword?” quoth the ruler.

“Here,” said the scribe, my poor self.

“Put on my leather coat, bronze hat, and leggings of scarlet leather, the finest in the kingdom,” quoth he, “that the wizard and the warriors and the maidens may see me in all my beauty, the strong war-ruler.”

It was done, and never finer appeared the man of muscle who carries the heaviest club.

“Bring in the wizard,” said Batta,—“who is there that is afraid?”

Then did my one knee exchange greetings with its fellow, as I the scribe went forth. For I was sore in terror, but Batta was not scared, though he was pale from his long sleep.

Forth went I to the swordbearer, gave greeting, and bade him bring in him-who-makes-images.

So the wizard was brought into the light of the presence of Batta, our ruler, who spoke thus:

“Well done, Swordbearer. You have caught him, the bat who flies in darkness. Did he scratch you?”

“Not at all,” answered he of the sword. “I bade him vow by the sun that he would do me no injury. And he said he would

vow me by the sun, the moon, the stars, or by whatsoever, if only again I would not poke him with my sword. So came he most quietly."

"It was well done," quoth Batta. "There is yet some zebra. Regale yourself. The sauce, too, is good."

Then my ruler and I were left with the wizard.

"It has come to my ear," spake Batta, "that you live in a dark-some cave beneath the hill that is before the sun, and work witchcraft, catching away my people's souls with thy black box. What say you, O Wizard?"

The wizard smiled, but his lips were of the color of sand.

"O Batta," thus spake he, "I am but a poor man. I gather simples, herbs in the woods. I do cook them over the burning of sticks and of the black-stone-which-burns-long. Thus do I extract their strength, and therewith do that which to common men seems strange."

"But," said Batta, "all this is naught. What of the box—the soul-catcher?"

"It is but a picture-box," said the wizard. "It is curiously wrought, and will do in a winking of your royal eyelid more than a cunning worker in paint can do from dawn to dark."

"But," again spoke Batta, "that is witchcraft."

"Nay, great ruler," replied the wizard, "it is no witchcraft, and it harms no one."

"I fear me," said the ruler, making as he spoke a sniffing with his nose, "that there is the smell of enchantment about thee."

"Pardon, wise ruler," replied he of the box; "that is but the odor of herb-extracts I use in making images."

"And the stains upon thy hands?" asked the keen-eyed, the wise Batta.

"The same extracts," replied the wizard. "I can hardly remove them, though I wash me until I am weary with washing."

"You have a glib tongue," was the saying of the ruler, "but I fear me it is of two ends."

"Not so," answered the wizard; "there is nothing of the black art in me. It is a simple thing I do. See—" and he raised the box.

"Point it not at me!" spake Batta, rapidly. "Try it on yon scribe, for if harm should befall him there are more among my people."

Then would I have fled, but my legs sank beneath me.

"Have no fear," said the wizard; "I have but to touch this little piece, and all is done, without harm to any."

"I know nothing of your box," said Batta, and did lay chin upon his hand, like a counselor; "but mayhap I had better drop thee and thy box into the sea that rests not."

Then the wizard set down the magic chest, and smote his breast. At last he spoke:

"Great ruler," said he, "if you will give me a few more risings and settings of the sun, and will send to my cave your scribe, I will show to him all my art, so that he may make the picture-flats, likewise. You know that he is no evil-worker, and he can tell you all my art. If not, you will know that I am speaking with a false tongue, and can throw me from the cliff down where the waves roll white."

"'T is little risk," replied my ruler; "a scribe more or a scribe less does not count in the roll of the fighting-men. Take him, and work thy wicked will upon him until the moon is a round shield. Come then again, and thou shalt be released or thrown into the sea which eats boats."

Then went I on my knees to the great Batta, trying with my tears to melt his heart. But as the drops from the wide-foot bird's back, so rolled my tears from the heart of Batta, who cared only for the good of his people.

So went I with the wizard to the cave to learn of the picture-flats.

Midnight moonless was bright day to the lightless gloom of that cavern. But there was a fire in front which gleamed like the fire-flashing fly of the swamps in the early of the year. And we ate of divers strange things. There were two-shelled soft fish that he did fry until they were toothsome. [NOTE: Perhaps a form of the fried oyster.] And there were also the thin-shelled sea-pinchers who go sidewise as doth a maiden seeing a gnawer of grain.

Wearied by the walk, I slept till the birds sang, and then rose to the meal of dawn.

Soon after, the wizard brought out his box, and though I shrank in terror from it, he did smile and encourage me till I put a finger upon it. It bit me not, and I felt braver. But a scribe is not a warrior. His blood is but ink.

The wizard said:

“O Scribe, fear not. 'T is a box such as holds thy styluses and reed-pens. But it has curious bits of bronze and of rock-you-can-see-through, whereby it makes pictures. Come, and I will give you the knowing of it.”

Then he did open it; and it was black inside as a burnt stick, and had an eye in the fore part. He clicked at it with the forefinger, and did put in a flat piece like gray flint, and behold! a picture thereon, like unto the clear of view of midday, but smaller than the face in a baby's eye. It was most marvelous! He did also twist a bit of bronze around and brought a fog upon the little picture, which, however, presently cleared away as he did twist more.

[NOTE: Apparently the “wizard” was trying the focus upon what answered for the ground glass.]

Thus did he several times, and behold I grew bold, and did the same under his direction!



A Wizard:
One who -
makes - images.

"THE WIZARD SAID: 'I CAUGHT YOU WELL. I THINK IT WILL COME OUT GOOD.'"

Then went we forth under the sky, and the wizard asked if I would throw up my hood and catch it again. In wonder at his silliness, I nevertheless did that folly. And just then I heard the clicking of the box, and the wizard said:

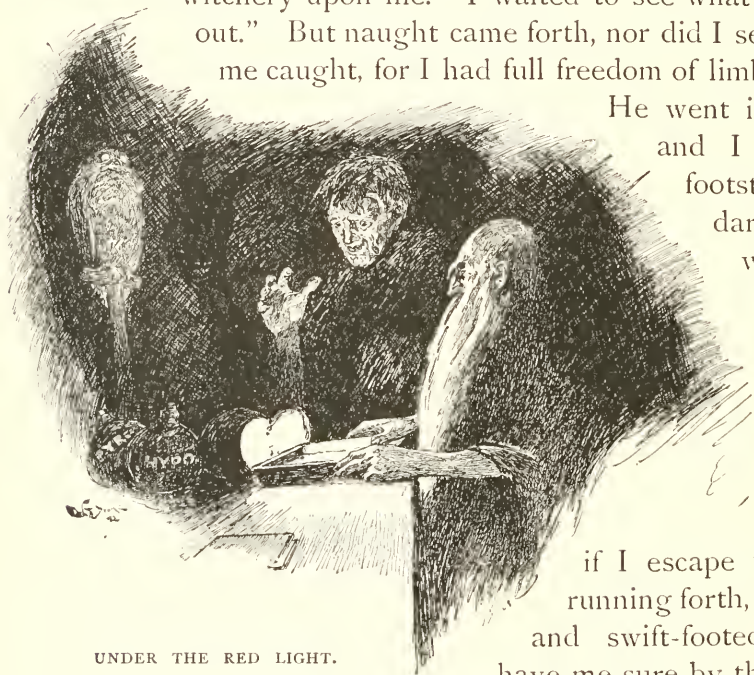
“I caught you well. I think it will come out good.” Thereat was I sore afraid lest my foolish play with my hood had wrought witchery upon me. I waited to see what would “come out.” But naught came forth, nor did I see that he had me caught, for I had full freedom of limbs as before.

He went into the cave, and I followed his footsteps. It was dark therein; but when he told me that I must come, I went, though I shook yet a little. “For,” said I to myself, “even

if I escape the wizard by running forth, he, the mighty and swift-footed Batta, will have me sure by the tunic.”

So I went. There was a little light burning there, but the wizard did forthwith blow it out with the breath of his mouth, and did with a flint enkindle another light—a horrible light, the color of the crimson at sunset. Even yet with eyes shut I can see that witch-glow.

There in the redness did he open his box, draw forth a strange contrivance from which came a flat, light-colored shell, four-cornered,



UNDER THE RED LIGHT.

and thin like scraped horn. This was dropped into an earthen dish which held some most ill-smelling compound. And he rocked the dish, to and fro, smiling a ghastly smile,—such as is the grin of the long shark in the water of the deep. But behold, the dark and the light took shape and became an image! And if all the prophets and if all the counselors of the tribe were to prophesy till the hair of all was gray upon their shoulders, they could not have divined what was the image which came forth to mock me!

It was my soul. For as I leaped in the air to catch my hood, the wizard had caught my soul from me and fixed it there within the awful black-box-which-has-an-eye! But I was changed so that my own dear mother would not have known me. My face, paler than that of the sunburned warriors, was black like those of the men of the far south whose hair twists. My dark tunic was like the snow that flies in the sky when men walk upon rivers and the flowers die. All was like nothing I ever saw.

Then did the wizard wash the flat piece in a spring that came from the rock near at hand, and he did wash and wash again, until even the weariness of the rocking was not so long. Then did he soak the piece in another liquor in yet another dish, while I was faint with the long darkness.

Gladly I saw the sunlight again, and heard the birds chirp as if black caves were not.

“More washing?” I asked; for it seemed that there would never be an end of the plashing of water.

“Only a little,” said the wizard. He did fix the flat piece next in a four-sided frame, and cooked it in the sunshine, while I wondered if he would desire me to eat my soul, baked in the sun, for dinner!

But after he had baked the frame, he did break it open, and then came more washing. I thought that the wizard would wear out his fingers with much plashing in the water.

I think that my eyelids must have shut me to sleep for a while, but when I opened them there stood the wizard, and in his hand he did hold a picture wherein I was shown to leap like a horse in fresh pasture, bounding after my hood in the air with the fool-play I have told.

Thus saw I first the making of pictures, and that day was like many that followed. Nay, I did even make pictures myself with the wizard to stand by and say, "Do thou this," "Do thou so"; but of the witchcraft of it little did I know. I was but as his hand or foot in doing his bidding.

In all that we did the wizard feared the light. For he said that the sun would steal away the pictures—which seemed strange enough to me.

Meanwhile grew the moon, till it came round like a shield, and we were to go to the ruler. The last day I was with the wizard, I did make two pictures by myself, and he did praise me and gave me one wherein I did look too sweet, like unto the coo-bird, and brave as the roarer is brave before the bleater. This received I gladly, for I knew not before how comely I was.

At sunrise did we set forth for the dwelling of Batta, the sagacious-in-combat. The wizard carried the wonder-box. I did carry earthenware jars filled with liquids and compounds, very heavy, and I did also carry many of the flat pieces, each closed cunningly in a case like a quiver.

When we came unto the town, Batta sat upon his throne beneath a sun-shield.

"Aha! Wizard," he cried, "then you have not eaten our scribe? 'T is as well, mayhap. Now, has he learned your art?"

"In sooth, that has he," said the wizard, cheerfully. "Will not you try him?"

"That I will," spake Batta. "Go thou to work, Scribe, and take

three trials. Paint me the picture of Batta — Batta who puts foes to flight! Three trials shall be thine, and then —”

So ceased Batta. But when the wizard tried to go with me to the hut, Batta forbade him.

Then did I as I saw the wizard do ere he took the box for making a picture, and forth I sallied to do my best.

As I came forth, I pointed the box at the great Batta, and I pushed upon the magic piece, and hurried back to the hut, which had been made dark save for the crimson light which we brought from the cave. Here went I through the washing. But no picture came!

Then strode I forth in sadness.

The wizard pointed an accusing finger at the box, as I came out from the darkness of the hut, and then knew I what I had done! I had not uncovered the eye of the box!

Again I essayed, and fled into the hut, but with careless hand did put the flat into the wrong dish. And behold again no picture came!

Then came I forth in sadness.

The wizard's face was like a dull day when the leaves are falling. But when I again pointed the magic-box, and opened its eye, and set in the proper pieces with all due caution, he smiled again.

With backward step, I betook myself for the last time to the dark hut, and rocked and washed and soaked and washed till I was weary like unto the slaves that row the galley of Batta.

And this time the picture came forth like sunshine after a rain; and it was Batta — Batta upon his throne, and dressed as for war. Then rushed I forth rejoicing with my prize, and the wizard made merry.

Into the warm sun did I set the picture to cook, and when I took it forth it was so like to Batta that I thought it would speak; and I showed it to him proudly.



"DO I LOOK LIKE THAT?" CRIED HE TO THE WIZARD.

But, as the cloud comes over the face of the sun, so descended wrath upon the black brows of the great ruler as he gazed.

“Do I look like *that*?” cried he to the wizard.

“It is your very image!” spoke up one of the younger warriors.

“You are banished for life!” roared the just and great ruler of his people. And it was so from that day forth. “Do I look like *that*?” he asked again, with the voice of a thunder-peal, this time turning to the white-haired counselor, he-who-speaks-little-but-wisely.

“I would not be so foolish as to say it was like you, great Batta!” answered the counselor; and the rest who stood about said that his words were wise.

“Your art is no art!” then said the great Batta; and, calling the swordbearer, he ordered that the wizard’s box should be thrown into the sea, together with his vile compounds, his dishes, the liquids, and his flat pieces and the baleful red-fire maker.

And it was done upon that instant.

“It were best to send thee with thy tools!” said Batta; and in a moment the wizard was hurried to the brink of the cliff which hangs over the playground of the waves —

Here the manuscript is torn, and it is impossible to decipher it further. But I am sure that the reader will agree with me in deciding that it contains an early account of photography, and also that the conclusion, imperfect as it is, would lead one to suppose that the art was somewhat discouraged.

Those who desire to verify the translation will find the original document among the archives of the Grand Lama’s Museum in Tibet. You will find it at the back of the top shelf on the left-hand side.

THE TONGALOO TOURNAMENT

WHEN I was a young man, about thirty years of age, I came to the city to make my fortune. I had no profession and was ready to do anything honorable that promised me fair wages. To save my money, I boarded with another young fellow who was also looking for work. He was hardly more than a boy, about fifteen, I think, but he may have been younger.

His name was Marmaduke Ferron, and I think he must have been French, he was always so gay and confident. Nothing made him blue. Even when we had spent all but enough to pay one week's board he would not be discouraged. He went every day to answer advertisements or to ask for work.

I was older, came of Scotch stock, and was more easily disheartened.

One day, after a long tramp about the city without finding anything except an agency to sell very poor chromos, I came in, and settled down by our little cylinder stove, entirely hopeless. I had about made up my mind to go back to my country home, when Marmaduke came in. He seemed very jolly, and for the first moment I thought he must have found work. Then I remembered that he always did come back in a happy frame of mind, and I became gloomy again.

This time, however, Marmaduke had found something — though I was inclined to sneer when he told me what it was.

"Well, our luck has turned at last!" said he, brightly. "I knew it would."

"Have you found a place?" I inquired, with but little interest.

"Yes," he answered. "And what is better, I have found a place for you, too."

"What is it?" I asked, with some little hope.

"I went to answer an advertisement calling for agents willing to travel abroad," said Marmaduke, "and I found a firm of dealers in notions who wanted two young men to go to Corea and sell a miscellaneous cargo."

"Corea? Where 's Corea?" I asked, for I had only a vague notion of the country.

"Don't know, I'm sure," said Marmaduke, as if impatient of the interruption; "but the old man I saw was quite confidential with me. He told me that his firm had bought a large number of roller-skates and did n't quite know what to do with them."

"Why don't they sell them?"

"They can't. These are the old-fashioned kind. They fasten with straps," Marmaduke explained, "and all the new roller-skates fasten with clamps. So there is no market for them in this country."

"And why do they think they will sell in Corea?" I asked, but with little interest, for the whole scheme seemed to me very absurd. "How did the firm come to buy them?"

"There 's a queer story about that," said Marmaduke earnestly. "They told me about it in confidence; but I can tell you, because we are going into this enterprise together."

"You're sure of that?" I asked, smiling in spite of myself.

"It 's a splendid chance!" said Marmaduke. "The way they came to buy them was this: the senior partner of the firm is getting old and is a little shaky in his intellect, but he loves to buy things; and as his partners are his sons, they don't like to interfere with his

pleasure. Usually he buys only trifles, but somehow he had an idea that these skates were a great investment and he has bought hundreds of them. He expects to 'realize,' as they say, a large profit."

"How ridiculous!" I broke in.

"I don't think so," said Marmaduke. "I think the old man has a very level head. Do you remember Lord Timothy Dexter and the warming-pans?"

"No, I don't," I answered, and he was too impatient to tell me about it. He was full of the Corean enterprise.

"Corea," he said, "is, they tell me, a new country. That is, it has n't long been open to commerce. I believe the natives will jump at the skates!"

As I was tired and sleepy I refused to hear anything more about so foolish a venture, and went to bed. Marmaduke tried in vain to talk to me as I was undressing. I shut my bedroom door and put out the light.

Next morning, however, there was a very strong argument in favor of the plan. That was my lack of cash. I must do something, and as this firm offered to pay all our expenses and give us a commission besides, both on the present lot of skates and on all for which we might make a market, I could n't see that we risked anything. Then, too, I was fond of the boy, was glad to be with him, and had n't the heart to disappoint him by refusing. In short, I consented, though I was sure we were going on a fool's errand.

So we set sail. Marmaduke was full of hope, and I, though expecting nothing, was glad of the sea-voyage and of the rest. The first part of our journey was by steamer, and the latter part was by a sailing-vessel. The voyage was without anything to compare in interest with our adventures on land, so I will pass on to the time when we were put ashore near a native village which looked about as dreary and melancholy as any place could look. There was n't a

thing in sight except the low mud houses thatched with a sort of rushes.

We found out afterward that we had made a serious mistake. The place to which our cargo was consigned was something like a city — as nearly as such things exist in Corea. But, by a mistake in the name, we were landed upon an island where no white man had preceded us.

Consequently, the natives had fled in terror when the ship landed us and unloaded our boxes of skates and then sailed away as rapidly as possible. The captain, to judge by his hasty departure, knew the character of the natives and was glad to put a few leagues between his ship and these savages. For savages they were, as we soon found out. No sooner was the ship out of sight than the bushes round about the beach began to blossom with heads. Then the natives came out one by one, and before we fairly understood our position we were seized, bound hand and foot, hoisted upon the shoulders of some outlandish warriors, and borne away in triumph, followed by a long file of natives, carrying each a box of roller-skates.

We were entirely unarmed, and could have made no resistance even if there had been time.

“This is a pleasant beginning!” I said, with some bitterness.

“There ’s nothing very unpleasant so far,” said Marmaduke cheerfully. “You know I was afraid we might have trouble with the custom-house, or that the freight charges might eat up our profits.”

“There does n’t seem to be any trouble about getting into the country, I must admit,” I answered frankly. “But I am afraid there may be some question about who owns the goods when we get there.”

“I don’t believe in going to seek trouble,” said Marmaduke. “They evidently want our company, and seem to have no objection to carrying our baggage.”

Meanwhile, the Koreans made no remarks, but kept up a steady jog-trot which soon brought them to the center of the village, where they halted before a hut larger than any we had seen.

Here they untied us, and made signs that we should enter the hut.

"Probably the custom-house!" I said dryly.

"The principal hotel, I think," said Marmaduke, stretching his legs and arms.

The building contained only one room, and at the further end of this sat the chief—at least we judged so because he was the cross-looking man in the room; and we subsequently discovered that we were right.

Then began our trial. Though, of course, we could not understand a word that was said, it was very easy to follow the general line of the talk.

First, the man who commanded the procession which brought us in told his story. He described the ship, our landing, the ship's hasty departure, the capture of ourselves, and, concluding, pointed to the boxes.

Then the chief commanded one of the boxes to be opened. It was forced open with a small hatchet-like weapon, and one of the skates was handed to the chief. He was completely puzzled. He blew on it, rubbed it over his head, weighed it, tried to spin it, and then turned to us, saying something like:

"Walla ella ing-kang-cho?"

Thereupon Marmaduke replied sweetly:

"Yes, most noble panjandrum. You have hit it exactly. It's a simple roller-skate. I see you don't understand it at all, and I'm not surprised. You don't seem over-intelligent."

The chief shook his head impatiently and growled. Then he picked up an ivory baton lying by his side, and struck a sweet-toned gong.

"I hope that 's dinner," said Marmaduke, and I agreed with him, providing we were to be guests only, and not the choicest dainties on the bill of fare.

But we were wrong. As the gong tones were dying away a curious figure entered the hut and made its way toward the dais where the chief was sitting. It was that of an old man with a scanty



"TAKING THE SKATE VERY GINGERLY IN HIS LEFT HAND, HE SPUN THE LITTLE WHEELS WITH HIS RIGHT."

snow-white beard. He carried a carved rattle in his hand and shook it as he walked.

"Well, Old Rattle-box," said Marmaduke, "I hope you will help us out of this fix. Maybe he 's an interpreter."

"More likely to be the head cook," was my suggestion.

The new-comer conferred for a few moments with the chief, and then bent all his energies to the mystery of the roller-skate. Need-

less to say, it was too much for him. But he seemed clever enough to pretend he knew all about it. So, taking the skate very gingerly in his left hand, he spun the little wheels with his right. Then he dropped it as if it was a very hot potato, and turning to the chief began to chatter away in a tone which showed he was bringing some frightful accusation against our innocent merchandise.

The chief, as the old man spoke, drew himself away from the skate, which had fallen near his foot, and regarded the harmless wheels and straps with an expression of dread and distrust.

"I see the old fellow's game," said Marmaduke. "He does n't know at all what it is, any more than his superb highness the igno-ramus on the bench. And so he has told them it's witchcraft, or bugaboo, or taboo, or something of the kind. They'll be for slaying us outright in a moment, you'll see."

And indeed in a minute the chief gave a hasty order, and the soldiers advanced upon us.

"Good-by, Marmaduke, my lad," said I, in a sorrowful tone. "Life is short at best, dear friend, and—"

"Don't be a whiner yet," said Marmaduke. "You have n't heard the counsel for the defense yet. I'll move the whole court-room to tears in a moment."

"You are a brave boy," said I, smiling sadly at him. "Good-by! I should not have led you into this trouble."

"You just keep quiet, and you'll see me lead you out of it," said Marmaduke. Then, while the chief was giving some too plain directions to the guards, ending up by drawing his hand eloquently across his throat, Marmaduke arose to his feet.

"Fellow-citizens!" he said. All the natives turned toward him, for his voice was as commanding as that of a foot-ball captain. "You are making idiots of yourselves. As for Old Rattle-box there, he does n't know beans. If there were any sense in his noddle, he

would have guessed what the roller-skate was for in a jiffy. Just see here." Then Marmaduke took a pencil from his pocket, and seizing a piece of the pine box, began to draw a picture.

Now Marmaduke was a natural artist, and consequently spoke a universal language. The natives bent over to see what he was doing, and even the chief elbowed his way to the front, after pushing over several of the other selfish spectators.

Marmaduke made a picture of himself on roller-skates, gliding gracefully over the ground, and drew a native running at full speed beside him. In vain did "Old Rattle-box" stand outside shaking his head and muttering his disapproval. Marmaduke's picture had excited the natives' curiosity, and when he leaned over and took a pair of skates from the box, seated himself, and proceeded to put them on, only one hand was raised to prevent him. Rattle-box tried to take the skates from his hand, and was soundly cuffed by the deeply interested chief. Then we knew that the tide had turned.

In a moment Marmaduke strapped on the skates and arose to his feet. Luckily, the floor was of hard beaten earth and made an excellent rink. As he glided gently along the floor the chief caught him by the arm, pointed to the door, smiled very significantly, and shook his head.

"That 's all right, old man," said Marmaduke cordially. "I 'm not going away. At least, not till I 've sold out my skates. Put a guard at the door!" and he pointed to a soldier and then at the doorway. The chief was a quick-witted old warrior, and he saw the point at once. The guard was posted. Then Marmaduke, who was an excellent skater, motioned the crowd back, and cut pigeon-wings to the admiration of his spectators.

They laughed and shouted and clapped their hands with delight. At last Marmaduke said to me, "Don't you think that 's enough for the present?"

"Yes," I replied, smiling in spite of myself. "But I don't see what good it is going to do."

"Well, you shall see," said Marmaduke. So then he glided gracefully on the "outside edge" over to the chief, and made signs that he was hungry.

The chief, now in the best of humor, nodded, laughed, and gave some orders to an attendant. In a few minutes some hot rice and other food (chickens, I think) was brought, and we sat down to our first meal in Corea. But previously Marmaduke made signs to the chief to send the crowd away, by pointing to the door and pushing at the crowd.

The chief smiled again, cleared the room, and contented himself with posting two strong spearmen at the door.

As we ate our meal Marmaduke conversed with the chief, and by patient endeavors at last made him understand that he, the chief, could also learn this wonderful art. Then the joy of the old barbarian was unbounded, and he wished to begin at once. But Marmaduke pointed to the dinner, looked imploringly at the chief, and thus obtained a postponement until the meal was done.

But no sooner was the table—or mat—cleared, than the chief held out his feet for the skates.

"He will break his royal neck, sure!" I said nervously, thinking what our fate would be in case of such a happening.

"Oh, I think not," said Marmaduke cheerfully; "but we have to take some risks in every business. This is a sort of speculation."

"But his feet will go out from under him at the first step," I insisted.

"We must support him," said Marmaduke. "Put on your skates, and remember that if 'Jack falls down and breaks his crown,'—we're ruined!"

We put on our skates; we strapped the royal feet firmly to the treacherous rollers, and helped him up.

A fish out of water was nothing to the antics of that unfortunate savage. One guard at the door tried in vain to restrain his mirth. When the king went scooting over the floor, as we supported his limp frame with its two awkward legs projecting aimlessly forward, the guard burst into a loud guffaw. The chief, or king, heard that



"A FISH OUT OF WATER WAS NOTHING TO THE ANTICS OF THAT UNFORTUNATE SAVAGE."

unhappy man's laugh, and, struggling wildly to his feet, roared an order to the other guards. The unfortunate soldier was at once hurried away to prison, or something worse. Thereafter there was no outward levity.

We toiled with His Royal Highness for several hours. He was plucky, and gave up only when completely tired out. Then we took a recess until the following morning.

For the next day or two we were in high favor at court and fared sumptuously ; and when the king found that he could really skate alone he was perfectly happy. Of course he had a fall or two, but the craze for roller-skating was upon him, and Marmaduke's first exhibition had shown him that there was still much to learn. Consequently he was anxious to keep our favor, at least until he acquired the art, and did not mind a bump or two.



"I DO NOT THINK THE CHIEF WAS EVER MORE AMUSED IN HIS LIFE THAN WHEN HE SAW RATTLE-BOX ON THE ROLLERS."

At first the chief was unwilling to allow any one else to learn ; but Marmaduke, who had even learned a few words of the language, persuaded the old man that it would be great fun to see Rattle-box learn to skate ; and at last the chief consented.

When the old medicine-man came in he was horrified to see the ruler of his nation gliding about the floor with considerable ease, and listened with terror to the chief's command that he, too,

must acquire this art. But he did not dare refuse; and, besides, the clever old man foresaw that skating would be the fashion as soon as the knowledge that the chief had patronized it should become general.

I do not think the chief was ever more amused in his life than when he watched Rattle-box take his first instruction on the rollers. He laughed till he cried, and even permitted the guards to laugh too. But the medicine-man was an apt pupil, and before long there was a quartet of fairly skilful performers on the floor.

Then we threw open the doors to the public, and gave a grand exhibition. It would no doubt have run (or skated) a hundred nights or more. The success of the art was assured, and the next month was one long term of skating-school. We had plenty of skates, and the chief caused a large floor to be laid and roofed over for the sport. Soon the craze was so general that the chief had to make penalties for those who skated except at certain legal hours.

Marmaduke could by this time readily make himself understood in simple sentences, though he was not far enough advanced to comprehend much that was said; and one day he announced that he was ready to return to New York.

"But they 'll never let us go in the world," I said, somewhat out of temper. For, to tell the truth, I was not at all pleased with Marmaduke's apparent interest in this barbarous people.

"Oh, yes, they will," said he. "You will see. We 'll just get into a boat and row away."

"And be a target for all the bowmen in the island!" I said. "You 've had wonderful luck so far, I admit; but I don't care to run a skating-rink for Corean savages all my life."

"Nor do I," said Marmaduke. "I 'm going to give a grand tournament with prizes, and then give up the business and leave Tongaloo forever."

“And be eaten at the conclusion of the tournament!”

“I think not,” he said, and turned again to his work. He was painting a large poster, with native dyes, representing a grand skating-race. Over the top he had printed in large letters:

THE TONGALOO TOURNAMENT!

“There!” said he, as he finished. “Now you must do all you can to make the thing a success!”

So I did. I went about all day among the skaters, saying: “Bonga Tongaloo tournament! Vanga goo Tongaloo tournament!” and other such phrases as Marmaduke taught me. These words meant, he said, that it was all the rage, and *the* correct thing.

At last the great day arrived. The chief had furnished the minor prizes; but the great event of all was to be the final, straight-away race open to all comers, and for this the first prize was to be Marmaduke's gold watch, and the second my stylographic pen.

The course was laid out along the best native road, which Marmaduke had taught them to macadamize for the occasion. The distance was to be a mile out and then back again to the starting-point.

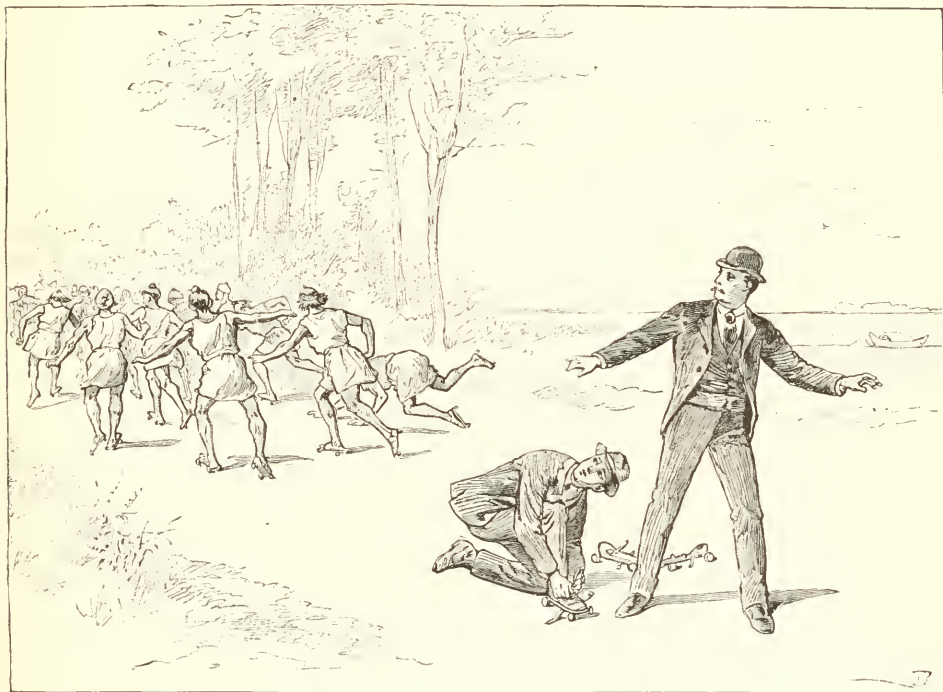
Every able-bodied islander was entered, and Marmaduke and I put on our skates with the rest.

Amid tremendous excitement the signal was given, and away they went—clatter, clatter, clatter, clatter!—down the road.

Gradually, Marmaduke and I, though apparently making unusual exertions, fell behind, and as soon as the crowd had gained a good lead on us, we sat down, cut off our skates, and struck out across country for the beach.

One or two of the nearest skaters stared after us, and then

tried to pursue; but as they forgot to remove their skates, so soon as they reached rough ground they went over upon their noses, like ninepins, and in a few minutes we were far ahead.



"AS SOON AS THE CROWD HAD GAINED A GOOD LEAD ON US WE CUT OFF OUR SKATES AND STRUCK OUT FOR THE BEACH."

We gained the beach just as the foremost pursuers began to push their way through the bushes, and, climbing into a boat, away we shot toward a neighboring island which was occupied by a more civilized race.

Well, we escaped without being hit by a single arrow, and sailed for New York shortly afterward.



(Guaranteed strictly untrue)

“**M**AMA, please tell us a story!” cried all the young dragons. “Children, do be less noisy!” said their father, the Honorable Samuel P. Dragon. He had slain a knight that very evening and was perhaps a little irritable. Young dragons should be thoughtful, and should never disturb their parents after the night’s fighting is over.

“Hush, children!” said Mrs. Dragon. “Your father has to fight hard all night, and in the day he needs his rest. I will tell you one nice story, if you will promise to go quietly to bed afterward.”

The youngsters coiled down into comfortable hollows in the rock, and Mrs. Dragon prepared to begin her story.

“I suppose you would prefer a man-story?”

“Please, Mama. We are *so* tired of ‘When I was a little

dragon.' Tell us a real man-story; but be sure not to have the dragon hurt. We like it to end happily, Mama."

"Very well. Listen quietly, now. Don't rustle your wings nor flop your tails. Sammy! stop blowing flames into your sister's face, this moment!—or not a word shall you hear.

"There was once a most delightful land, full of bogs and moist-smelling marshes, of dark rocky caves, all damp and cold. The lakes were covered with beautiful green mold, no flowers grew in the fields—nothing but cool rushes, ferns, and mosses. In short, it was a land in which any dragon might be glad to crawl: no sunshine to shrink the scales or dry the wings, no bright glaring meadows to dazzle one's poor eyes. Why, even at mid-day one could slide comfortably about on the slippery, slimy banks and never catch a blink of a sunbeam on the water."

"Oh, how nice! Really and truly, Mama?" asked the small dragons, laughing with so much delight that the flames from their pretty scarlet throats lighted up the cave until Mr. Dragon stirred uneasily in his dreams; for he had fallen asleep.



"Really and truly," their mother went on, in a lower tone. "In this charming country, your father and I began our cave-keeping. We were very happy for a time, for not too far from us was your father's estate—a fertile valley well stocked with plump and well-flavored inhabitants. You have never seen any whole men, have you?"

"No," they replied eagerly. "What are they like?"

"Oh, so ugly. To begin with, they have no scales, no wings, no claws—"

"No wings and no claws? How frightful they must be!" exclaimed young Samuel Dragon, Jr., proudly expanding his green pinions.

"Not a wing!" replied Mrs. Dragon. "And they walk, when mature, exclusively on their hind legs."

"Why is that?" asked the children.

"I cannot tell. It does seem absurd. When young they go on all-fours like sensible animals, but the elders pull and persuade, teach and coax, until the poor little things rear up on their hind legs, and then the foolish old ones seem satisfied. Men are very queer. When they first came on this earth,—this earth where dragons dwell,—they lived, properly enough, in caves like the rest of the world. But they are a stupid and restless kind of creatures, and soon began to tear pieces out of the world to make caves to suit themselves. Now they slaughter trees, slice and split them, fasten the pieces together, and stalk in and out of queer little holes called 'doors.' But I cannot spare time to tell you any more about their curious instincts—you must read it for yourselves some day in the 'Dragon's Economical Cave-keeper,' the marketing manual. Look in the index under 'Animal Foods: Apes, Men, and various Bipedes.' You will find it interesting—and useful too.

"As I said, we were happy for a time. We used to stroll out quietly in the evening, and often managed to secure a nice chubby

man or two in an hour's flight. But at length came an age when those mean creatures decided to revolt. That is, they kept in their little caves at night, and compelled us to go out so frequently in the unhealthful, glaring daylight, that our scales were hardly fit to be seen. Even with all this exposure, we would succeed in catching only some of the little ones; indeed, during a whole month I caught nothing but two thin miserable specimens. Think how your poor mother suffered! I was almost starved. I became so thin that I rattled!"

Mrs. Dragon looked at the young audience, and saw that the eyes of the two smallest were really shedding sparks. She was touched by their sympathy, but, fearing the story was becoming too sad, hastened to brighten it.

"Well, dears, it did not last long. Your father was young, rash, and brave, in those nights. One dawn he said, 'Really, Scalena, this will not do. I can stand this foolishness no longer!' I asked what he intended, but he waved his tail in a threatening way, and smiled knowingly as he whetted his claws on a new piece of sandstone. The next night, bidding me not to be anxious, he left me. I looked after him as long as I could see the flames in the sky, and then returned wearily to our cave to pick the last bone.

"The next morning, just at dawn, he returned with a delicious marketing,—he said it was a *butcher*, I think, though it may have been a *judge*; the flavor is much the same. Then, when we had retired into the darkest, dampest, coziest corner of the cave, he told me very modestly the story of his great achievement.

"Your brave father, children, had been down to where the whole swarm of men lived, and actually had beaten to pieces one of the wooden caves! He made light of his exploit, and only rejoiced in it because, as he said, he had no fear now of famine or even of



scarcity. We sat up late that happy morning, enjoyed a delicious supper, and slept soundly until nightfall.

"We arose with the moon, and after a hasty but effective toilet on his new sandstone, your father advanced glidingly toward the mouth of the cave, when suddenly there presented itself a dark object with a shiny coat, much like that of a dragon. Indeed, we thought for a moment it was some neighbor who had dropped in to breakfast. But in a few seconds we saw that it was what is called a *knight*. A knight, children, is an animal which, though edible, is noxious, and sometimes dangerous to young or careless dragons. I have heard of such being even killed by this spiteful little pest. They are found among men—in fact, they are a species of men that has a hard shell. You know there are hard-shell crabs and soft-shell crabs, and so, likewise, there are hard- and soft-shelled men. Our visitor was a hard-shell who had, while prowling about, found our cave either by accident or wilfully.

"I do not deny that I was a trifle anxious; but your father was merely angry. Giving a great roar, he blew out a mass of dark smoke and scarlet flames at the unfortunate little knight.

"But, though small, the knight was plucky and showed fight. As your father carelessly leaped toward him, the knight scratched dear Papa slightly with a long, hard stick, on the end of which was a bit of very hard shell. Then the knight rode out—for he had enslaved an unfortunate horse, as these cruel men do, my pets, and by means of a contrivance in its mouth, he made it carry him about wherever he chose.

"Your father eagerly followed, though I sought in vain to restrain him. 'No, Scalena,' said he. 'This is a question of principle! As a true dragon and your loving mate, it is my duty to destroy this dangerous little fellow. Do not be foolish; I will bring

you the body of the fierce creature. They are excellent eating. But you must sharpen your claws, my dear, for the shells are exceedingly hard to remove and most difficult of digestion.

"I obeyed him, for your father is always right, and out he flew with a rush of smoke and flame."

"Oh, Mother!—and was Father killed?" asked one of the youngest—little Tommy Dragon.

"Of course not!" replied his elder brother, scornfully. "Don't you see him sleeping over there, all safe and sound? Don't be so silly!"

"You must not speak so sharply to your little brother," said Mrs. Dragon, "or I shall end the story at once!"

"Oh, please go on," exclaimed all the young dragons; "it is just the most interesting part!"

Pleased with their eagerness, she resumed:

"I did not see the hunt, but your father has often described it to me. The knight came wickedly at him, hoping to scratch him with the sharp stick; but with one whisk of his long green tail, your father broke the thing into small pieces! So you see, Sam," said this thoughtful parent, turning slyly to her eldest son, "it is most important to practise your tail-whisking—and I hope you will not forget it when you go to your next lesson."

Sammy Dragon turned saffron with confusion, but it was evident that he resolved to profit by the little moral so ingeniously woven, by careful Mrs. Dragon, into a mere man-story.

"After the stick was broken," she went on, "the vicious little knight snatched out another, made entirely of the hard shell with which the first was only tipped. With this he tried his worst to break some of your father's lovely scales. Think what a ferocious animal this knight must have been! I cannot see what they are

made for. But, then, it is instinct, perhaps; we must not judge him too harshly.

"This new weapon met the fate of the other. It was crunched up by your father's strong teeth, and then he descended upon the little hard-shell man with a great swoop—and that decided the battle! Your father is a modest dragon, but he was really proud of the swiftness with which he ended that conflict. After he once had a fair opportunity to use his newly sharpened claws, there was no doubt of the result!

"We ate the knight at our next meal. I was glad to welcome your father; but he said, 'Pooh! nonsense!' and made light of the whole matter!"

The young dragons were delighted, and even thought of asking for another story; but their mother, for the first time, noticed that it was almost broad daylight.

"But goodness, children, I hear the horrid little birds singing!" said she. "Run away to bed with you. Wrap yourselves up tight in your moist wings, and be sure to sleep on damp rocks in a draught where you will keep good and cold."

The youngsters crawled away to rest, while Mrs. Dragon went to rouse the Honorable Samuel P. Dragon. To her surprise she saw his great green eyes glowing with a sulphurous satisfaction.

"There are no times like the old times!" said he, drowsily. "That was really a splendid hunt!"

"Yes, dear," replied his mate, with a proud and happy smile; "but I had no idea *you* were listening to my foolish stories. We must now go to rest, or you won't be up till midnight—and then there won't be a single man about. Remember, 'It is the late dragon that catches the knight.'"

The Honorable Samuel P. Dragon rubbed his claws gently together as he selected a nice cozy place for the day. He was hum-



"THERE WAS NO DOUBT OF THE RESULT."

ming to himself, and faithful Mrs. Dragon smiled fondly as she recognized the tune. It was:

“I fear no foe in shining armor!”

“Ah!” said she to herself, “the old people like man-stories as well as the little ones!”





A LAZY magician, tired of work, left Damascus and went into a sandy desert, seeking quiet and solitude. Finding a lonely place not yet divided into building-lots, he filled his pipe, and, after smoking it out, fell fast asleep.

An indolent wizard, looking for rest, came riding across the desert upon a magic camel, which he had made out of an old rug that morning, and, not seeing the sleeping magician, ran over him.

Now, magical creations cannot touch magicians without vanishing. So the wizard's camel vanished, the wizard fell plump down on top of the magician, and the baggage which the camel carried was scattered on the sand.

The wizard was the first to collect his senses, and asked, in a fierce voice: "Where is my camel?"

The magician replied, with some anger: "Don't you think you'd better ask some one who was awake while your camel was getting away?"

"You are the only man I have met in this desert," replied the wizard.

"Perhaps," resumed the magician, "your camel may have climbed one of the trees with which you see the desert is covered; if you think I've got him, you can search me."



THE INDOLENT WIZARD ON THE MAGIC CAMEL MEETS THE LAZY MAGICIAN IN THE DESERT.

"I made that camel only this morning," said the wizard, complainingly.

"You are then a magician?" asked the other.

"No; I'm only a wizard," replied the first.

"Well, *I'm* a magician, and I should think you would know better than to drive your camel up against me."

"It was careless, I admit," replied the wizard. "But let that go; I can make another. I hope I did n't hurt you?"

"Oh! not at all; I was lying down there on purpose; that is why I came to the desert, where there are so many passing," remarked the magician, rubbing his side.

"I cannot regret an accident which brings me so agreeable a companion," replied the wizard, with a low bow.

"I 'm sorry to have lost my temper," said the magician, more good naturedly; "but, since I came to this desert looking for quiet and solitude, I was *not* glad to see you."

"I, also, was sorry to meet any one, even yourself, for I was equally anxious to be alone," rejoined the wizard, frankly.

"Well," said the magician, thoughtfully, "since you are a wizard and I a magician, and each of us wishes solitude, the matter is easily remedied. Nothing is easier than to put twenty leagues between us. I have only to wish it."

"Allow me," asked the wizard, politely, "to join you in the wish."

"Certainly," said the magician; "we can save our feelings by making the parting mutual. We will wish together."

"Agreed," said the wizard, eagerly. "Are you ready?"

"Quite!" returned the magician, delighted.

So they raised their wands, shook hands, and said together: "I wish myself twenty leagues away!"

They were powerful enchanters, and the wish was at once accomplished. In an instant they stood together in a place twenty leagues away.

"I am afraid," said the magician, after a moment's silence,— "I am afraid that this cannot be called a success. We have traveled some distance, but solitude seems as far off as ever. Perhaps we forgot to take it with us. We must wish again; this time, each for himself!" The wizard agreed that this was the best plan. So, saying, "Excuse my back,"

he turned from the magician and wished himself back again where he was at first. Instantly he was there, among his pieces of baggage.

"Ah," said he, smiling, "it was not a bad adventure, but I am glad to be alone again!"

"Ahem!" exclaimed a voice behind him. "I beg pardon, I 'm sure; but I fear there has been another mistake. I am sorry to see we both happened to find this spot so attractive!"

The wizard turned and saw the magician standing behind him, looking very foolish.

"So you 're there, are you? Well, it was a natural mistake! We must have no mistake this time. I 'll give the word, and let us each wish ourselves forty leagues away in opposite directions—you to the east, I to the west."

The word was given, the wands waved, and, presto!—nothing at all! Each stood where he was before, for each expected the other to wish himself away.

"It seems to me," said the wizard, after a slight pause, "that it is hardly fair to expect me to leave all my baggage lying around here on the sand!"

"But I was here first," said the magician.

"Yes, to sleep. It strikes me as rather a spacious bedroom!"

"I like a large bedroom," replied the magician. "But we wander from the subject. It is, of course, useless for us to wish again. We have had our three chances, and must now make the best of it. Sit down and have a smoke."

In a moment they were puffing out blue clouds of smoke, sitting cross-legged opposite each other.

"May I ask," said the wizard, presently, "how long you have been practising your profession?"

"Only since Merlin's time—say about a thousand years. I was a pupil of Merlin, and a very good teacher he was."

"Indeed!" said the wizard, with more respect; "that is a long time. I cannot claim more than five centuries. I am but a beginner beside you."

"By hard work you might have learned much in that time."

"I fear I have been lazy," said the wizard, regretfully.

"Perhaps, being, as Shakspeare will soon say, 'an older soldier, not a better,' I might be able to give you a useful hint or two. We have still some daylight before us. Suppose we have a lesson?"

"I fear I will only bore you," said the wizard, rather nettled by the patronage of the other.

"I have nothing else to do, and should enjoy teaching so promising a pupil," said the magician, rather pompously.

This was a little too much, for the wizard had graduated with the degree of F. W. (Full Wizard) some three centuries before. He attempted to make excuses, saying: "I am really out of practice; my wand is dusty from disuse."

"Oh, bother your excuses! I can see your true rank at once. Go ahead!" said the magician.

Not seeing how to refuse without being rude, the wizard, after a minute's hesitation, rose and, walking a little apart, drew a circle in the sand. Standing here, he waved his wand slowly in the air and repeated a mystic incantation. The magician, who had only received the degree of P. M. (Passable Magician) when *he* graduated, looked on very critically.

At the most impressive part of the charm, the wizard suddenly and violently sneezed, in spite of all he could do. Much ashamed, he turned to excuse himself.

"Oh, that 's nothing," said the magician, with a condescending smile. "It is a little awkwardness natural to a beginner. No more than I expected! Throwing your arms about creates a draft—makes you chilly; you sneeze, naturally enough. Go on; we won't count this time."

The wizard was much vexed, but kept his temper and resumed the charm. Soon, a mist poured from the tip of his wand, like the smoke from a cigar, and formed a cloud above his head, which slowly revolved and wound itself up into a ball until, as the chant ended, an enormous figure appeared. The wizard turned proudly to the magician, who said nothing. At length the wizard, seeing no sign of movement in his rival, asked confidently: "How 's that?"

"Well," said the other, crossing his legs as he filled his pipe, "it is n't bad—not *very* bad. It is really fair work, of a certain kind. But it is n't the way *I* was taught. However, I 'm afraid of hurting your feelings."

"Not at all," said the wizard. "I am delighted to be criticized. Speak freely, I beg!"

The old magician, with a bland smile and half-shut eyes, went on: "Well, it seems to me too long—much too long. If you were in a hurry,—suppose a rhinoceros was stamping his feet on your door-mat,—you would n't have time to do all that. That cloud is no use; it only spoils the effect; it is out of style. And your spirit looks rather stupid and under-bred—an ugly wretch!"

A terrific howl was heard as the spirit dashed down upon the magician, seeking to tear him to pieces. The magician gently raised his wand, and the spirit melted as snow does into the ocean, and the magician went on quietly: "That shows you what a fool he is—no discretion and no stamina."

The wizard was rather cast down, and said sullenly: "Perhaps you will show me how you would do it?"

The magician smiled, and rising, took a handful of dust and threw it over the wizard's head.

"When are you to begin?" asked the wizard.

"Look around," said the magician.

The wizard turned, and saw a little winged figure, looking like a fairy.



THE WIZARD RAISES AHAB.

"That is *my* spirit," said the magician.

"It's too small to be of any use," remarked the wizard, scornfully.

"I think you will find it quite large enough for all practical purposes."

"Why, *my* spirit," said the wizard, "could roll yours up like a dry leaf and put it in his pocket!"

"Well," said the magician, good-naturedly, "I have no objection to that; let him try."

The wizard pronounced the incantation and summoned his spirit.

"Ahab," cried the wizard, calling the spirit by name, "fetch me that small imp!"

"Master, I obey!" shouted the spirit in a voice of thunder, and then suddenly dashed down upon the little fairy.

If the fairy had remained still it might have been hurt; but, just as Ahab came rushing down, the fairy darted away like a humming-bird, too quick for the eye to see the motion. Ahab made a clutch, but caught nothing but sand. Again he tried, but with no better success. A third and fourth trial so exhausted the huge monster that he sat down upon the sand completely tired out.

The wizard danced around in a perfect rage; and when Ahab gave it up, raising his wand he waved it thrice, and commanded the fairy to stand still. The fairy bowed, and stood quiet.

"Now, Ahab," said the wizard, triumphantly "bring her to me!"

Ahab arose, and walking heavily to the fairy, took her by the arm. The arm came off in his grasp; but Ahab, not noticing this, brought it to the wizard.

"You dunce!" commenced the wizard; but the absurdity of the situation overcame him, and he laughed, saying: "Well, bring me the rest of her!"

On the next trip, Ahab brought the head.

"Very good," said the wizard; "perseverance will bring her. Go on."

In a few more journeys the pieces of the fairy lay at the wizard's feet.

"There!" said the wizard, in triumph; "I think that ends *your* spirit!"

"Not at all," said the magician, pointing his wand at the heap of arms, wings, body, and head. In an instant the pieces flew together, and the fairy stood before them as well as ever.

"Come now," said the wizard, angrily, "that 's not fair!"

"You had to help your spirit, why should n't I help mine?"

"I only kept your spirit still!"

"I only put mine together!"

The wizard had to admit the justice of the magician's claim; but, completely losing his temper, he said angrily: "I don't believe you are any sort of a magician, with all your airs! You may have a friend among the fairies, but I 'd like to see what you can do by yourself. Send your spirit away, and we 'll see who is the better man!"

The spirits were dismissed, and the magician, never losing his temper, said, with a smile: "I can't afford to show my magic for nothing! If you will insist on seeing what I can do in the way of real old Egyptian magic, I will show you, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That he who shows the best magic shall take the wand and power of the other. Do you agree?"

The wizard, although startled, was too angry to be prudent, and replied boldly: "I agree!"

"Let us lose no time, then," said the magician, with a crafty smile. "Are you ready?"

"Quite ready," said the wizard.

"Find that, then!" And, as he spoke, the magician threw his wand high into the air. An immense bird that was flying overhead clutched the wand, and flew off with lightning speed.

"A baby's trick!" said the wizard, laughing. "I learned that with the alphabet. The idea of playing magical hide-and-seek with me!" and breaking his wand into nine short pieces, he stuck them up in the sand, forming a circle around him. Out from each suddenly sprang a wire and stretched itself along above the sand, like a serpent, only a thousand times faster; and down from this wire fell poles and stuck up in the sand. In the middle of the ring of sticks sat the wizard, with a telegraph instrument, ticking away for dear life. In a moment he stopped and listened. An answering

tick was soon heard; and the wizard, smiling, said: "We shall have a despatch very soon! Wonderful thing, the telegraph—wonderful!"

A speck was seen in the distance coming quickly toward them. It soon resolved itself into a small boy, running as fast as he could.

"Well, my boy?" said the wizard, rubbing his hands, as the messenger arrived.

"Please, sir, here 's a package and a letter for you, sir," replied the boy, puffing a little from his run. "Please sign my receipt."

"Certainly, certainly," said the wizard, scarcely hearing what was said; and handing the package to the magician, he opened his letter. It read as follows:

BORNEO, July 12th.

Your message received. Inclosed find wand as requested. Had to shoot bird. Sorry. Will have it stuffed.

Yours,

AHAB.

The magician opened the package, and there was the wand.

"You are a little behind the age," said the wizard. "I should think you would know better than to race with electricity!"

"You really did it very well, very well, indeed," said the magician, a little vexed; "but, as you say, it was a baby's trick; I was foolish to try it."

"Well," said the wizard, "let us not waste any more time. Do your very best this time, and let us get through with it!"

"Please, sir," said the telegraph messenger, "sign my receipt; I 'm in a hurry."

"Get out! I can't bother with you now!" said the wizard, impatiently. "The idea," he went on, to the magician, "of stopping me now for such a trifle as signing a receipt!"

The boy laughed softly to himself, but no one noticed him, so he stood and watched what was going on.

Meanwhile, the magician was thinking over his very best tricks. At last he said, solemnly: "This time I 'll show you something worth seeing!"

Then he wiped his wand in the skirt of his robe, and pronounced a long incantation, while the wizard pretended to be very tired of it. As the incantation proceeded, a crystal ball formed itself out of the air and floated before them.

"What 's that for?" asked the boy, apparently much interested. "That 's the biggest marble I ever saw!"

"That," said the magician with great impressiveness, not noticing who spoke, "is the magician-tester. Merlin invented it for the express purpose of putting down conceited magicians. Such is its peculiar construction that only the greatest and most powerful magician can get inside of it."

"Get into that marble!" said the boy. "I don't see what for."

"Probably not," said the magician, much amused.

"Now see here, Johnny," said the wizard, impatiently, "don't you think you 'd better run home?"

"I must have my receipt signed," said the boy, positively; "besides, it 's fun to see this game."

"Never mind him," said the magician. "Now, what I propose is this: You and I stand about twenty paces from the tester; then let the boy count three (for, while you pay for his time, we may as well use him). Whoever first appears in the tester shall be the winner."

"Am I in this?" asked the boy, much delighted.

"Certainly," said the magician, smiling graciously.

"Let 's see if I know the game," said the boy, eagerly. "You two fellows stand a little way off, then I count three, and you two cut as fast as you can for the marble; and then whoever of us three gets into it first wins?"

The magician was much amused to see that the boy included himself in the "game," and replied: "Well, yes; that's the game. There can be no harm in your trying."

"What's the use of talking nonsense to the boy?" asked the wizard.

"Oh, it amuses him and does n't hurt us," replied the magician, good-naturedly.

"Get your places!" called the boy, who seemed to enjoy the game very much.

They retired in opposite directions, while the boy also went back some distance.

"All ready?" cried the magician.

"Hold on," said the boy, suddenly; "I'm not half so big as you two—I ought to have a start!"

The wizard was much provoked at the delay, but the magician said, laughing: "All right, my boy; take any start you like, but hurry."

The boy took a few steps, carefully compared the distances, and took a step or two more. He seemed very much excited.

"Is that about right?" he asked.

"Yes, yes; do hurry up!" said the wizard.

"Are you ready?" said the boy.

"Yes!" they replied.

"One — two — three!" shouted the boy, and off he went as fast as his short legs could carry him. The wizard and magician, starting at the same instant, ran with very great speed, and reached the tester on opposite sides at about the same time. Both did their best to get inside; but it was no use. Each turned away, thinking himself defeated. In turning from the tester, they met.

"Hallo!" cried the magician, "I thought you were inside the tester!"

"And I thought you were!" said the wizard, equally surprised.

"Well, what does this mean?" asked the magician.

"I can't tell," replied the wizard; "I did n't make the tester; there must have been some mistake."

"Oh, no; it's all right," said the magician; "we must try again. Where's the boy?"



"BOTH DID THEIR BEST TO GET INSIDE."

"Here I am!" said the boy's voice.

"Where?" they asked, not able to see him.

"In the marble," said the boy. "I've won!"

There was no mistake. They both could see him, coiled up in the tester and grinning with delight.

"This is too ridiculous!" said the magician. "Come out of that, you little monkey!"

"I sha'n't," said the boy, clapping his hands with glee. "I've won, and I'm to have the prize!"

"You sha'n't have anything but a good thrashing!" said the wizard, and, catching up his wand, he rushed toward the tester.

But at that moment, a crack was heard. The tester broke like a bubble, and forth from it came the majestic figure of the enchanter Merlin.



THE MAGICIAN AND THE WIZARD GO HOME.

The wizard and magician fell upon their knees.

"It is Merlin!" they cried.

"Yes," replied the enchanter, gravely, "it is Merlin. When a wizard and magician spend their mighty powers in juggling tricks fit only to amuse fools, those powers must be taken from them.

You have made the agreement, and must abide by it. Drop your wands!"

The wands fell upon the sand.

"Go home, and work!"

They went home and worked, and neither of them married a princess or lived happily ever after.

Merlin laughed softly to himself, and remarking, "There 's a couple of dunces!" changed himself back into a messenger-boy, signed his receipt himself, and walked away over the desert. Soon he disappeared over the horizon, and all was still.

THE SEQUEL

MY rudeness, as usual, was entirely unintentional ; I meant to have given him my undivided attention. But the long roll of the steamer, the soft ocean breeze, and the flapping wings of the sea-gulls must have overpowered me. At all events, I slept, and heard only the sequel.

The steamer ran between Calcutta and Liverpool, and was on her return voyage. Among the passengers was Mr. Chubaiboy Mudjahoy, supposed to be an East Indian gentleman from the interior. Attracted by his quiet and intellectual face, I had become well acquainted with him, and our acquaintance had grown, during the long voyage, almost to intimacy. Upon the day of which I am speaking we had been much together. He grew communicative, and at last proposed to tell me the story of his life.

To my surprise, he said that the impression that he was an East Indian was without foundation in fact ; that he came from Tibet, from an unknown district of that unexplored region.

If I remember correctly, he related a marvelous story of having entered into competition for the hand of a neighboring princess. This part, so far as I recall it, was quite in the old-fashioned fairy-tale style ; and the tests required of the candidates were certainly astounding. One I remember vaguely was to bring the favorite uncut pigeon's-blood ruby from the Rajah of Camaraputta, a cruel Indian magnate.

Here it was, however, that the sea began to gently roll, the

breeze to soothingly blow, and the sea-gulls to drowsily flap their limber wings. I slept some time, for when, thoroughly refreshed, I blinked lazily to waking, all I heard was:

“And so I married the Princess!”

I was sorry to have lost the story, for it was, no doubt, just the sort I like. But I did not dare to confess my doze, so I said as brightly as I could:

“And lived happily ever after!”

Mudjahoy moved uneasily, and replied:

“Well, hardly. Of course I expected to; but then, you know that real life is often different from what the kindly story-tellers would have it. No; I can't say we lived happily ever after. Nor was it Dorema's fault. I have met a number of princesses, and I really cannot see that my Dorema has any superiors.”

“How then do you explain it?” I asked. (Of course I had to be a little cautious in my questions, for fear of bringing up references to points I had missed during my nap.)

“I'll tell you the story, if you have not heard too much already?”

“Oh, no!” I replied. “Not at all too much. Pray go on.”

So Mudjahoy told me the second part. I have always regretted that I heard only this sequel. I tell it in his words:

You can see that after having accomplished such a series of tasks I was sure to be respected and envied at court. We passed the honeymoon in the mountains, and as we took but a small retinue, several thousands, Dorema often spoke of the strange solitude as a delicious rest after the bustle and turmoil of court life.

For my part, even in my happiness with Dorema,—she was really charming!—I found the retinue something of a bore. At home, I had never been attended by more than three or four servants, while here I had to find employment and use for a hundred

times as many. It was really one of the minor nuisances of my new dignity.

If the old king had not abdicated, it would have been easier ; but now all his servants were added to the new ones purchased or given as wedding-presents to me.

It was like this :

If I wished to shave in the morning in the old days, I would



"ENTER A SMALL BOY IN WHITE LINEN."

heat some water, strop my razor and whip up some lather, and shave away ; but as a king it was very different. As a king, I had first to clap my hands. Enter a small boy in white linen. To him I intimated my desire to see one of the high officials. High official arrives, and I say : "We wish to shave our effulgent self." High official says : "Oh, very good, Most Particularly Noble Cousin of

the Dog-star," and so on. Then he disappears and sends the Chamberlain to tell the Seneschal to tell the Chief Barber that his Imperial Master wishes to be shaved. Not to weary you, after some more, many more, wholly unnecessary and irritating ceremonies, behold me ready to be shaved!

I am extended at length in a chair, being lathered by the First Latherer in Waiting, while the Bowl-holder or one of his assistants stands by with the lathering mug, and is supported by the Brush-



THE SHAVING OF MUDJAHOY.

Receiver. The Chief Barber sits in state, fanned by two slaves, while the Razor-Stropper Extraordinary (a very powerful and much courted personage, as expert ones are rare) is getting the razor to an edge. He also is fanned by a fan-bearer or two. The Lord-High-Wielder of the Towel, and the Bay-Rum Custodian, also with attendants, are near, and in the anteroom I hear a confused murmur of voices, showing that the Court Surgeon and Court-Plaster-Bearer are, with their retinues, within call.

It was not so much the crowd of people that annoyed me, but

then it took so long to be shaved. We would begin at, say, ten o'clock,—they would n't hear of my getting up earlier!—and frequently when the last bit of lather was removed from my royal ear, it would be half-past one in the afternoon!

I give this only as a sample part of my day. It is vividly recalled because it was one of the earliest of the inconveniences attaching to my newly acquired royalty. Of course it is only a specimen brick—there were dozens of a similar clay.

It was only after I returned to the capital and took up my residence in the palace, that I felt sufficiently at home to make an objection.

One memorable day, a Thursday, I betook myself to my dressing-room and clapped my hands thrice. The linen-wrapper boy entered. I hated the sight of him already.

“Bring us a new turban,” I said shortly.

“O Brother-in-Law of the Pleiades—” said the boy in a trembling tone.

“Speak up, copper-colored child,” I answered a little impatiently. “What are you afraid of?”

“O your Imperial Highestness of the Solar System, your rays need clipping!” replied the boy violently making salaams.

“I was shaved yesterday,” I said.

“But—” began the boy.

“By the royal Palanquin!” I broke out; “send in the Master of Ceremonies!” The boy vanished, and soon with a sound of bugles, shawms, and tubas (several out of tune, too), the Master of Ceremonies, and his retinue, came in. This took about half an hour. When they were all settled I said:

“O Master of Ceremonies and—and such things” (I forgot the proper titles for a moment), “we would hold converse with thee apart, as it were.”

Again the wind instruments were wound, the brass band and retinue took its devious course along the corridors, and the music and marching gradually died away. This took about twenty minutes.

"Now that we are alone," said I to the Master of Ceremonies, "let 's have a reasonable talk."

"O Nephew of—!" he began.

"Never mind the astronomy," I broke in, "but proceed to business."

"Yes, Sire," he answered in a terrible fright, no doubt expecting the bowstring.

"Don't be a fool!" said I. "I 'm not going to hurt you. Stand up and have some style about you!"

So he did, somewhat reassured.

"Now," I said, "I 'm tired of all this fuss. Bring me a razor, and I 'll shave myself."

"But, your Serene Imperialness—"

"See here!" I said positively; "there 's not a hearer around. Just drop the titles and call me Mudjahoy or I 'll have you beheaded!"

"Well, Mudjahoy," said the Master of Ceremonies, easily, "I 'm afraid that it can't be done!"

"Can't be done? Am I the Emperor of this place, or—what am I?"

"Why, of course, Mudjahoy, you 're Emperor, and all that," he answered, with an ease of manner that surprised me; "but then there are a great many things to be considered."

"Well, go on," said I; "but I 'd like to have this thing settled one way or the other. Speak freely."

"It 's just this way," said the Master of Ceremonies; "what would you do with the Chief Barber?"

"Do with the Chief Barber? Why, nothing. He could do with himself."

“But his salary is enormous.”

“Cut it down.”

“But he is a very influential man; he has dependent upon him, directly or indirectly, about twenty thousand men, and these men, with their families, are a powerful faction. Then, too, the officials whose duties are similar—such as the First Turban-Twister, the Sandal-Strapper and his understrappers, and so on—would make common cause with him. You see?”

“Yes, I see,” I said thoughtfully; “but in the same way you could justify any foolishness whatever. You would prevent all reforms.”

“Oh, no!” said the Master of Ceremonies; “oh, no, Mudjahoy. Not reforms, but revolutions. You can very easily institute reforms; but you must go slowly.”

“But,” I objected, “you as the official in charge of ceremonies may well be prejudiced. Let us have the Grand Vizir summoned.”

“That will take an hour, at least,” answered the Master of Ceremonies, who really seemed a very nice fellow when you knew him well.

“Well, you slip out and get him on the sly,” I answered with an unofficial wink.

“All right, Mudjahoy,” he said, and out he went whistling a popular air.

While he was gone it occurred to me that I was now a married man, and that Dorema was certainly entitled to know of the step which I was contemplating. So, by the aid of four or five assistants, I caused her to be summoned.

She arrived a moment before the Grand Vizir made his appearance.

“I have called you, my dear Mrs. Mudjahoy—” I began, but she interrupted me.

"You must n't call me that!" she said, looking shocked.

"Why not?" I asked.

"You must say, 'my Imperial Consort,'" she replied, taking a seat upon a divan.

"Oh, no. Mrs. Mudjahoy is a pet name," I explained. She was pacified, and I proceeded: "I have called you, Mrs. Mudjahoy, to be present at the beginning of a Great Reform. I am about to make our life simpler, more enjoyable, and less burdensome in every way."

"Do you find it burdensome so soon?" she asked reproachfully, turning away her lovely head and trying to coax out a sob.

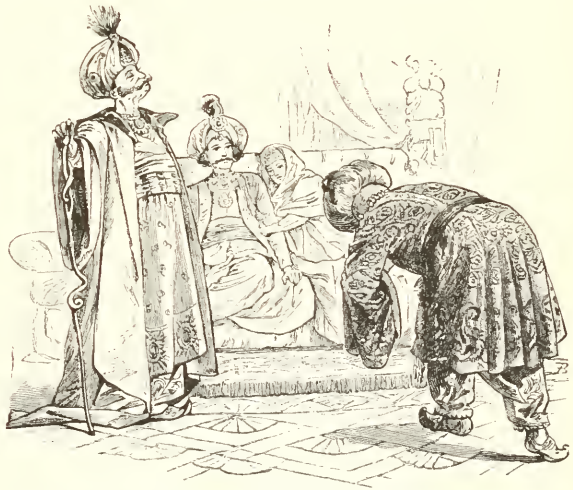
I saw I had made a mistake. "Not at all," I answered hurriedly; "but—here comes the Grand Vizir; you listen attentively, and you will soon understand it all."

The Grand Vizir entered. He seemed ill at ease, and I saw that he had a simitar under his caftan.

"What does the Celestial Orb require of the humblest of his slaves?" said the Grand Vizir, prostrating himself.

"Oh, get up!" I said wearily. Then I asked

the Master of Ceremonies to explain how the interview was to be conducted. So while Dorema and I exchanged a few tender nothings about the weather, the Master of Ceremonies explained to the Grand Vizir the nature of the conversation I had held with him that morn-



"‘WHAT DOES THE CELESTIAL ORB REQUIRE?’
SAID THE GRAND VIZIR.”

ing. The Grand Vizir seemed much impressed. I saw him tap his forehead inquisitively and feel for his simitar. But the Master of Ceremonies soon reassured him. Then they turned to me.

"See here, Mudjahoy, old man—" began the Vizir, with a refreshing absence of conventionality. Dorema looked horrified. She was about to clap her hands, undoubtedly to order the Vizir's instant execution, but I restrained her.

"Vizir," I said, "I do not care for ceremony, but civility is a *sine quâ non*." (That staggered him; he was weak on Latin.) "So drop the titles, but proceed carefully. Now go on."

He went on: "Mudjahoy, sire, I have been told of your contemplated reforms, and I am bound to tell you, as an honest adviser, that they will not work. You propose to dismiss the Chief Barber?"

"I do," said I firmly.

"And, I suppose, the Turban-Twister, and so on?"

"Yes."

"And to live in a simple and businesslike way?"

"I do," I replied.

"Well," said he, spinning his turban upon his forefinger and looking at it with one eye closed, "it will never do in the world—never! There was formerly an autocrat who tried to run this government on business principles, and—" he paused and sighed.

"Where is he?" I asked.

"The Garahoogly contains all that is mortal of him,—in a sack!" said the Grand Vizir meaningly.

Dorema clung to me and looked at my face imploringly.

"No matter," I said determinedly; "I shall carry out these reforms."

"You will fail," said the Master of Ceremonies, and the Grand Vizir nodded solemnly.

"So be it!" I said. "Kismet. I shall therefore request you, Grand Vizir, to give public notice of the abolition of all useless offices, of which I will give you a list after dinner."

"But consider!" said Dorema, in a low, frightened tone.

"Would you rather be the Imperial Consort Dorema, Queen and Empress of King Chubaiboy the First," I asked her proudly, "and have to be at the beck and call of all these palace nuisances,—or would you rather be my own Mrs. Mudjahoy, free to do as you please?"

For a moment she hesitated, and I trembled. But, brightening up, she asked: "And travel *incog.*?"

"Certainly," I answered; "nay, more: live *incog.* wherever we choose!"

"I'm for Reform and Mrs. Mudjahoy," replied my lovely bride.

The Vizir and Master of Ceremonies remained respectfully silent during our interview. Then the Vizir asked me: "Do you intend to abolish the Royal White Elephant?"

"Precisely," I answered. "That albino sinecure will be the first to go on the list."

"Is your life insured?" asked the Master of Ceremonies politely but impressively.

"No," I said. Dorema sighed. "But," said I, "you will see that the whole people will hail me as their deliverer."

"We shall see," said the Vizir; but I did n't like the inflections he chose.

Declaring the interview at an end, I dismissed my ministers, said farewell to my brave queen, and gave the rest of the day to the preparation of the List. It was comprehensive and complete.

"There!" said I, as I laid down my reed pen and corked the ink-horn. "To-morrow will look upon an enfranchised people!"

But the Grand Vizir was a man of considerable wisdom. We

were awakened the next morning by a confused sound of murmuring beneath the palace windows. I rose and threw open the flowered damask curtains.

The whole courtyard was filled with a tumultuous mob armed with an assortment of well-chosen weapons. They carried banners, hastily made but effective, upon which I read at a glance a few sentences like these:

“Down with the Destroyer of our Homes!”

“Chubaiboy to the Garahoogly!”

“We must have our White Elephant!”

“The Chief Barber or Death!”

“Turban-Twister Terrors!” and so on. Before I could read more, I saw the Chief Barber on the back of the White Elephant at the head of the mob. He was a Moor.

“O Chubaiboy!” said he, wielding a bright razor so that he reflected the rays of the morning sun into my eyes. “Will you abdicate, or shall it be the sack and the gently flowing Garahoogly?”

“Where is the Grand Vizir?” I said, after a moment’s hesitation.

“Here, your Majesty,” answered that official. I saw he was in command of the right wing of the mob. He looked very well, too.

“And the Master of Ceremonies?”

“Here, your Highness,” was the answer. He apparently led the left wing.

“And are you both against me?” I asked.

“We are!” they answered respectfully, but with considerable decision.

“And where are my adherents?” I shouted.

“Here!” said a sweet voice at my side. It was Dorema.

“Here!” said another soft voice. It was the boy in starched linen. I almost liked him at that moment.

“Any others?”

Then there followed a silence so vast that I could hear a fly buzzing derisively on the window-pane above me.

"And you are not in harmony with the Administration?" I asked the mob.

"No!" It was unanimous.

"Very well," I said. "Then I resign, of course. Let me thank you, my late subjects, for your prompt and decisive interest in public



"AND WHERE ARE MY ADHERENTS?" I SHOUTED. "HERE!" SAID DOREMA."

affairs. I had meant to carry out some much-needed reforms, and I had some thoughts that they would fill a long-felt want. Thanking you for this early serenade, and with the highest respects for you all and for all your families, from myself and from Mrs. Mudjahoy, I abdicate. Good-by!"

There were some cheers, I think from Dorema and the linen-

coated boy. Then the mob cheered for the Chief Barber, and I saw that my successor was already chosen.

We left that afternoon, and purely as a matter of humanity took the linen-coated boy with us; for I felt sure that he would not be popular nor long-lived if he should remain at home. He is a little afraid of me, but is useful.

We made our way to Calcutta, and took the steamer for Liverpool.

At this moment Mr. Mudjahoy was interrupted. His graceful wife came to his chair and touched him on the shoulder.

"Come," she said. "It is chilly on deck."

"Certainly," answered Mudjahoy, rising; "but let me first present my friend to you."

I was presented, and soon after said:

"Mr. Mudjahoy disbelieves the fairy tales."

"I do not understand?" said Mrs. Mudjahoy.

"He thinks that the hero and princess are not always 'happy ever after,'" I said.

"Why,—but they *are*!" said Mrs. Mudjahoy. "Are n't they, Chubai-boy?"

"On reflection, I think they are!" said he.

Then they bade me good-night.



A LOST OPPORTUNITY

MY BIOGRAPHER, if I should ever have any, would say in his first chapter: "From boyhood he evinced an aptitude for the Natural Sciences. He was seldom without a magnifying-glass in his pocket, and put it to most excellent use in familiarizing himself with those exquisite details of Mother Nature's handiwork which are sure to escape the mere casual observer." And in a later part of the same future rival to "Boswell's Johnson" will probably be seen these words: "In later life we see the traits of his boyhood deepened and broadened. The magnifying-glass of his school-boy days has become the large and costly binocular microscope surrounded by all the apparatus which the cunning

workers in metals know so well how to produce in limitless profusion for the ruin of the scientific amateur."

If such statements should be made, they will be based upon facts.

There are, however, other facts which no biographer will dare to tell, and which, therefore, I must write for myself. The following experience is one of them. Whether to my credit or to my discredit, I shall tell the plain story and leave it, with all its improbability, to your fair judgment.

Already knowing my taste for the use of the microscope, you can understand the following letter without further introduction :

AMAGANSETT, L. I., August 5th.

DEAR PHILIP : I suppose the thermometers in the city are the only scientific instruments now studied with any interest. Being cool enough here to be reasonably unselfish, I am willing to divert your mind from the thermometer to the microscope.

I inclose what seems to my prosaic mind a pebble. It was picked up on the beach and playfully thrown by me at our "Professor." He, of course accidentally, caught it. After an examination, he declared that it differed from anything he had ever seen : that it was neither animal, vegetable, nor mineral. In short, he knows that he does n't know what it is, and therefore says (speaking in true scientific vein)—"Although of indeterminate nature, certain fusiform bosses, in conjunction with a general spheroidal tendency, seem strong *a priori* indications of aërolitic flight through our own atmosphere, or other gaseous medium of similar density"! I make no comments. So bring out your microscope and let us know what it is. If you should come and join us you would find little but sand and salt-water ; but then there is plenty of each.

Sincerely yours,

CARROLL MATHERS.

He inclosed a small rounded object wrapped in tissue-paper. It was light blue in color and a trifle smaller than a hazel-nut. The surface seemed, as the Professor hinted, to have been somewhat melted. It certainly had claims to be considered a curiosity.

That evening, after dinner, I took out my microscope, and after carefully cleaning the pebble, I examined the surface under a strong



"AFTER AN EXAMINATION, HE DECLARED IT WAS NEITHER ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, NOR MINERAL."

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condenser, but thereby simply magnified the irregularities. "I shall have to cut it in two," I said to myself. It was very hard, and I succeeded only after some effort. I cut it through a little away from the center, and so divided it almost into halves. Examining the flat surfaces, I found a small dark spot in the center of one of them.

"I thought so!" I exclaimed triumphantly; "I will now cut off a section and shall undoubtedly find a petrified insect—perhaps of an extinct species!"

I sawed away the rounded side, and when I could see that the dark spot was nearer the surface, polished the section down with oil and emery-paper until I had obtained a thin disk with a dark spot in the middle.

It was now ready for the microscope. The focus was carefully found by slowly turning the fine-adjustment screw. The spot gradually defined itself and seemed about to assume the appearance of an insect—when, just at the point where I had expected it to be plainly visible, it suddenly disappeared, leaving a hole in the disk through which the light streamed! I was perplexed, and gazed stupidly. The light seemed suddenly to flicker, and then was shut off altogether.

I inspected the instrument carefully, but all seemed to be in perfect order.

I picked up the disk. There certainly was a hole through it.

"Perhaps there is something in the tube," I said, and unscrewed the eye-piece. Just as the eye-piece came loose something jumped from the tube, knocking the glass from my fingers.

I thought it was a moth or bug—but how did it come there?

"Well, that 's very strange," said I, aloud.

"Most extraordinary," a voice replied; a very small voice, but the words were clearly audible. I looked around the room.

"Don't trouble yourself to search. I am not afraid. I'm right here on the table!"

I faced the table again and discovered that what I had supposed to be a bug was, apparently, a man; and a very commonplace, quiet, and gentlemanly man, not at all remarkable, except for the fact that he was only about three inches tall. When I saw him he was



“KEEP OFF! DO YOU MEAN TO EAT ME?”

straightening out his odd little hat, which had in some way become slightly crushed.

My eyes at times deceive me somewhat, as my microscope work has made them sensitive; so I stooped to take a closer view of my visitor.

He appeared to be startled, and cried:

"Keep off! Do you mean to eat me? Beware! Giant though you be, I can defend myself!"

"Eat you!" I answered, laughing. "I am not a cannibal, even on a *very* small scale! And I have just dined. It was but curiosity. What in the world are you?"

"Curiosity, indeed!" he replied. "What in the world are *you*?" And he mimicked my tone to perfection.

I saw that he stood upon his dignity, and thought it best to humor him.

"You must pardon me," I began, "if my surprise on seeing a gentleman of your small presence caused me for the moment to forget the respect due to a stranger. But you yourself will not deny that the sight of such a mere atomy—a *lusus naturæ*, if I may be allowed the expression—would tend to excite curiosity rather than to remind one of the demands of courtesy."

This seemed to mollify him, for he replied, with a smile, "It is a strange sensation to hear one's self styled a *lusus naturæ*, but I cannot in justice complain, as I was about to apply the same term to yourself; and you certainly are colòssally enormous—prodigious! I trust, however, that *I* have controlled my curiosity, and have accorded you such treatment as is due a gentleman—even on the very largest scale!"

He paused and gazed upon me with undisguised amazement.

"How did you get here?" I asked, after a moment's silence.

"I should be delighted to know," he answered, with evident sincerity. "It may be I can tell you, when you are good enough to begin by letting me know where I am."

"Nothing easier," I said. "This is my room."

"A valuable piece of information," he said, with some sarcasm, "and the apartment appears to be comfortable and rather well arranged—with exceptions. I see you cling to antiquated styles."

"Indeed! I was not aware of it."

"Why," he said, seeing I did not understand, "you light the room with coal-gas, as the ancients did. You still use the mechanical clock instead of the vocable chronophotometer; your furniture is, I see, of wood instead of coherent alcyite, while—but I do not object to the effect—it is delightfully archaic in tone!"

"I really don't follow you," I replied, somewhat piqued, "but you might remember that, archaic or not, this room is my own, and your criticism upon it is as gratuitous as your presence in it!"

I admit that this was not precisely courteous, but his manner was very supercilious and provoked me.

"Why did you bring me here? I am sure I did n't request it," he angrily retorted.

"My atomic friend," I said impressively, "who or what you are, I neither know nor care. But kindly bear in mind this fact: I did *not* bring you here. I don't ask you to stay here; whenever you wish to go, I can bear your departure without a pang. Nevertheless, so long as you remain I shall expect you to behave in a gentlemanly manner!" Here I thumped upon the table, and he fell over. He recovered nimbly, and, drawing himself up to his full three inches, replied with the greatest dignity:

"My colossal acquaintance, there is one fact you must kindly bear in *your* mind: Who, or what you are is of little or no importance to me. How I came here, I know no more than yourself. Suffice it to say, I did n't come of my own accord; and, from my experience so far,"—here he paused and glanced scornfully about him,—“I have no desire to prolong my stay. But while I *do* stay I shall insist upon all proper courtesy and all due respect!"

His dignity was so absurdly out of keeping with his size that I could not refrain from a burst of laughter, and I became better-natured at once.

"Well," I replied, when I had recovered my composure, "now that we have come to an understanding, tell me quietly, in a friendly way, as one gentleman to another, something about yourself. If you will allow me the question, where do you live? Were you born a dwarf, or—"

"Born a dwarf!" he broke in angrily, "born a dwarf! You great, coarse, overgrown giant—what do you mean, sir?"

"What do I mean?" It was too absurd. "You ridiculous diamond-edition of humanity, what do you suppose I mean? I have always heard that dwarfs were sensitive; but, really, when one is only about half the size of a respectable jack-knife—"

"And I," he broke in again, "have always heard that giants were invariably thick-witted and rude; but I *did* suppose that any human being, even if he were as tall as the tallest trees and had a voice like a clap of thunder (which is far from agreeable to your hearers, by the way), might be sensible enough to—"

"So you think," said I, interrupting him, "that I am as large as the tallest trees?"

"Certainly," he said, with perfect seriousness.

I thought it worth while to convince him of his error, and therefore invited him to step to the window, against which the table stood. He did so, and, upon looking out, threw up his arms in sheer amazement.

"It is a land of giants!" he said, slowly and in an awe-struck tone.

"Ah!" I remarked quietly, pleased with my little object lesson, "you now see how much smaller you are than ordinary men."

"Ordinary men," he repeated very slowly and with an absent expression. "What then can he think me?"

He stood in silence, with his hands clasped behind him, and appeared to be deep in thought. When he spoke again it was with an entire change of manner.

"Am I to understand you, sir, that all the men, women, and children known to you are proportionately as large as yourself, and that everything is on the same gigantic scale?"

"It is exactly so," I replied seriously.

"And may I ask you to believe that I have never seen anything or anybody except upon the smaller scale which you can see exemplified in me? Did you never see any one of my size before, nor hear of us?"

"Never! except in fairy stories," I said frankly, for now he seemed to be really a very sensible little man.

"This is not a question of fairy tales, nor of joking!" he said, with great solemnity. "We are in the very midst of some great mystery. I must belong to a different race of beings—for I never heard, read, or dreamed of such enormous people. Where I live, all are like myself!"

This seemed incredible, but finally I asked, "And where do you live?"

"I live," he answered, "in the twenty-first range of precinct forty, Telmer Municipal, Waver, Forolaria; and by profession I am an Official Arranger."

"You are very exact," I said, with mock admiration.

"And where do you live?" he inquired.

"This is my home," I said; "the Alfresco, Madison street, New York City."

"Thank you," said he, with sarcastic gratitude. "I am as wise as before!"

"You know as much of my residence as I of yours!" I answered sharply.

"You cannot be ignorant of Telmer?" he asked, raising his eyebrows in surprise at my ignorance.

"You surely know New York City?" I rejoined in the same manner. "The largest city in the United States!"

"United States," he repeated, "and what are those—who united them?"

"Perhaps a history would give you the clearest information," I suggested.

"I think it might, if I had the time," he replied soberly, as he drew from his pocket what I supposed to be a watch; but it was too small to be clearly distinguishable. He pressed it in his hand, and I heard a sound or voice clearly enunciating: "Thirty-four degrees after the eighteenth." Before I could say a word he resumed, "It is too late to-night; perhaps you will save my time by telling me the substance of it?"

"Flattered, I'm sure." I felt as if I was again in school; but after a moment's reflection I cleared my throat and began:

"The Kingdom of England—"

"The what?" he asked, with a puzzled look.

"The Kingdom of England—where the English live—"

"What are the English?"

"Oh, come," said I, laughing, "you are talking English! We are both talking English!"

"Well, well," he said; "I was thinking a while ago how it could be that you were able to speak good Forolarian"; and he burst out laughing. Then suddenly ceasing he went on, "But if we begin on the mysteries we shall never get to the invited states. Pray go on."

"These English, you see, colonized a portion of America—"

"A portion of America—that is the name of a place?"

"Oh, what is the use!" I broke off angrily. "If I define every word I use, I shall never reach a conclusion. If you would like to pursue the subject further, my library is at your service."

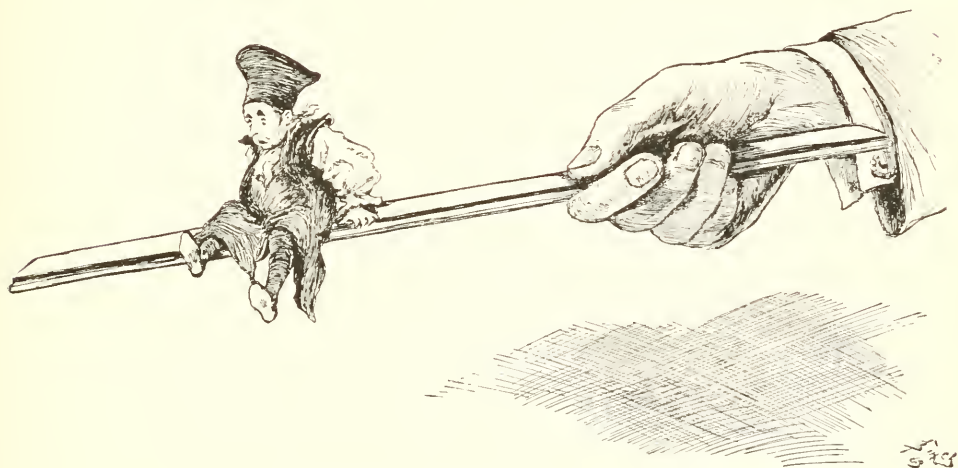
"Thank you," he replied, with dignity; "perhaps I could glean some information from *that* source." I made no reply.

Presently, seeing that he wandered about the table in rather an aimless way, I asked, "Can I be of service?"

“If you could suggest some method of reaching the floor—”

I offered him the ruler. He seated himself cautiously upon it, and I lowered him gently to the floor.

“Quite a walk to the book-case!” was his next observation. I had n’t thought of it, but proffered my services once more.



“I LOWERED HIM GENTLY TO THE FLOOR.”

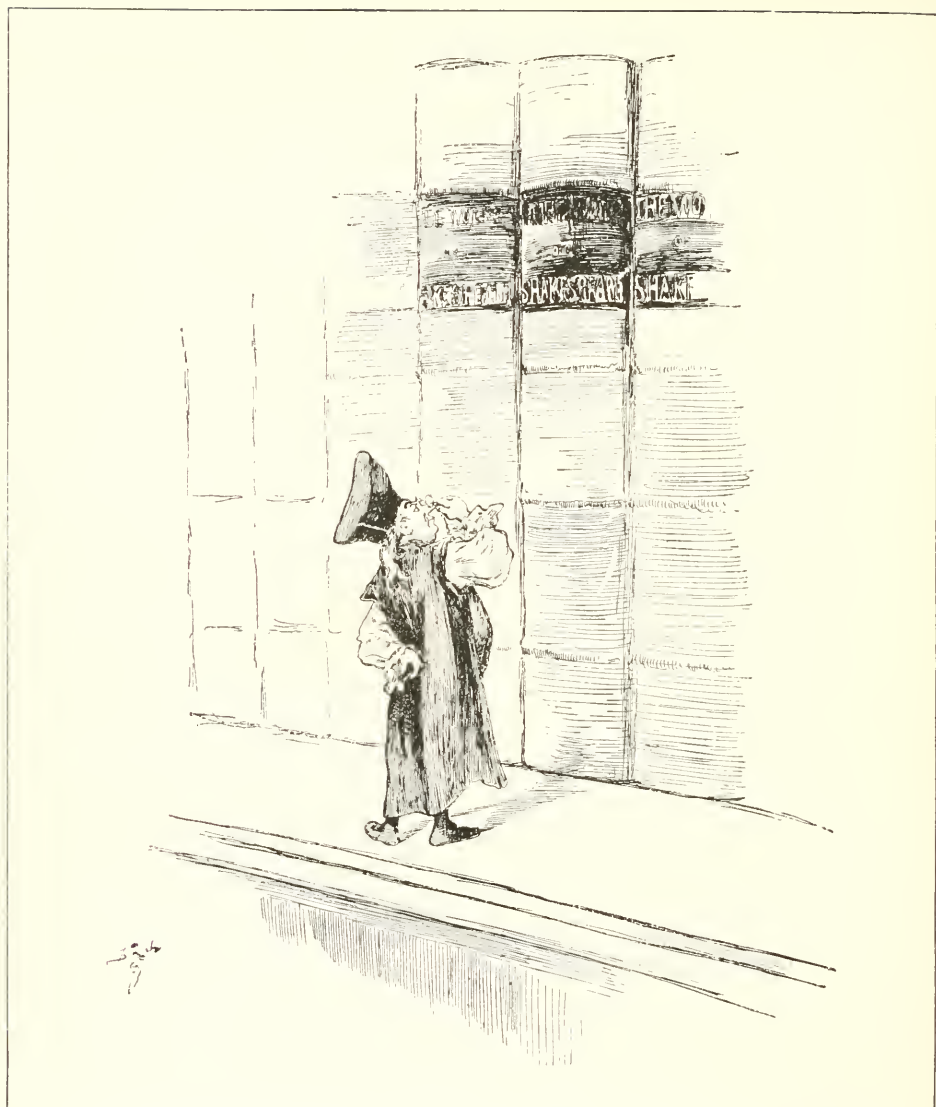
“Which shelf would you prefer?” I asked, as respectfully as possible, for certainly it was not an ordinary question.

“A matter of indifference to me, sir,” he replied with a mite of a bow.

“Equally one to me,” I replied, with a bow in return. I was resolved that he should do some thinking for himself.

“Let us say the lowest, then”; and he glanced at the upper shelves, perhaps calculating the possible result of a misstep.

I left him on the lowest shelf, returning to the table to put away the microscope. A slight cough drew my attention to the book-case.



"‘I ADMIRE THE BINDINGS,’ SAID THE LITTLE FELLOW, AS HE PACED TO AND FRO
ALONG THE SHELF."

"I admire the bindings," said the little fellow, as he paced to and fro along the shelf.

"I am gratified by your approval," was my indifferent reply.

"Particularly this one," he went on. "Let me see," he leaned far backward, and with much difficulty read the title: "'The Works of Sha-ké's-peare.' I should like to read them."

"Very well," I answered politely.

"Much obliged," said he fiercely. "Please lend me an electric derrick!"

"Pardon my stupidity—let me take it down for you." I stepped to the book-case, laid the book upon the floor, and returned to my work. A silence then ensued, which lasted so long that I looked up to see how he was progressing.

He was sitting on the shelf with his tiny legs hanging despairingly over a gulf of some six inches between himself and the floor. He was afraid to jump and ashamed to ask help. Catching my eye, he laughed and said:

"I am rather out of training just now, and not fond of jumping!"

"Say no more!" I lifted him to the floor, and turned away; but only to be recalled by a faint ejaculation. His mishaps were truly ingenious. He was caught beneath the cover of the book.

"My foot slipped," he explained with some confusion; "but if it had n't, I believe I could have opened the book all by myself!"

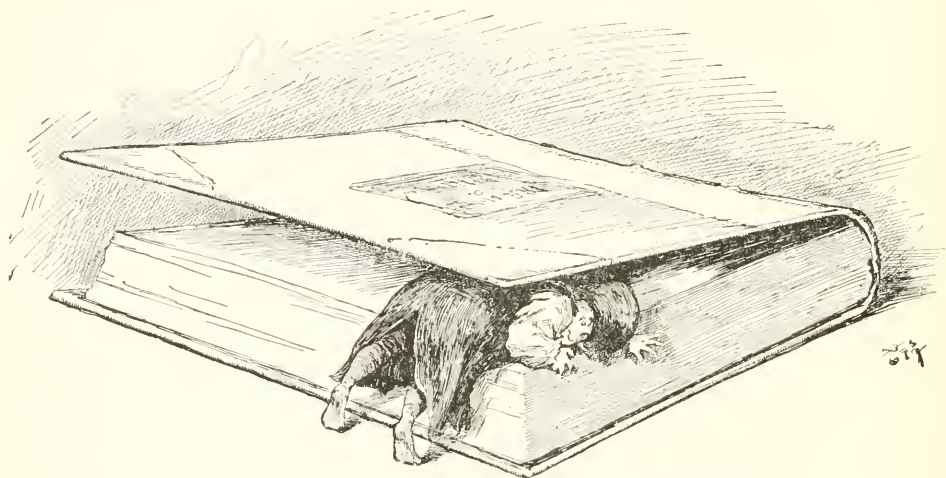
"I will not leave you, now, until everything is in proper order," I replied; for it occurred to me that to have any accident happen to him might be a very perplexing thing. Opening the book, I picked him up gingerly between my fingers, first asking pardon for the liberty, and deposited him softly upon the first page of "The Tempest."

"Are you all right now?" I inquired, to make sure.

"I believe so," said he, as he began to read—running to and

fro upon the page. However, I sat down near by and watched him, fearing some new difficulty. He read with much interest, and seemed to enjoy it thoroughly, except when he came to the turning of a page. That was a nuisance indeed, as he had to turn up one edge, crawl over it, and then lift the page over.

"Have n't you a smaller edition of this fellow's writings?" he



"HE WAS CAUGHT BENEATH THE COVER OF THE BOOK."

asked, somewhat exhausted by his efforts. "This is like reading sign-boards!"

"No," I replied shortly, "but if it tires you, you can read something else."

"But," said he, with some enthusiasm, "this is really quite good. It's equal to some of Wacoth's earlier and cruder work! It shows a talent that would well repay cultivation!"

"Yes, it *is* very fair," I replied, quietly; "Shakspeare certainly has produced some creditable plays—at least, we think so."

"I should like to have known him," went on my undisturbed

visitor. "I think we would have been congenial. Don't you think so?"

I paid no attention to this. What could I say?

"We consider him one of the best writers in the language," I said finally.

"I would like to hear about them," he said.

I pretended not to understand this hint; but he waited very patiently, and returned my gaze with quiet expectation.

"Now, look here," said I, calmly weighing my words, "I have, at present, other occupations which, I regret to say,"—this was sarcastic,—“prevent me from undertaking to give you a really thorough course in English literature. I might be more inclined to do so if I had something to begin on. Have you ever heard of Homer?"

"Yes," he answered eagerly; "my father has a cousin of that name—Homer Woggs!"

"I cannot believe it is the same man," said I, soberly. He seemed much disappointed. "At all events," I went on, "you cannot fail to see the folly of expecting me to explain to you all the events which have taken place since the world began. I finished school some years ago, and have no desire to review the whole curriculum."

I turned resolutely away and left him to his own devices. I worked quietly for a few moments, only to be interrupted by a "Whew!"

"What 's the matter now?" I asked, irritably.

"I 'm tired of lugging over these pages!"

"Well, don't do it. Sit down. Repose."

"But I 'm interested in the play!"

"I 'm not going to turn the pages for you."

"Could n't you read it aloud to me?" he asked, with cool assurance.

"I could, but I won't," I replied, rudely enough; but I was provoked at his impudence.

"You are very obliging," he said, sneeringly.

I made no reply. After a pause he made a suggestion.

"Although determined not to aid me to an occupation, perhaps you will not object to my sitting by and seeing what you are doing?"

I could not refuse so reasonable a request. I raised him to the table and gave him a paper-weight to sit upon.

He quietly watched me until I began to unscrew the glasses from my microscope, when he said carelessly: "I myself am a microscopic amateur!"

"It is an interesting subject," I replied.

"Yes. My success with the Mincroft glass was remarkable."

"The Mincroft glass,—I do not know it,—what is its nature?" I asked, with some natural curiosity.

"Why, the composite lens invented by Mincroft, which enables one to see the whole of a large object at once, all parts being equally magnified—but I bore you?" He pretended to yawn.

"On the contrary," I said, eagerly, "it has been my keenest desire to invent such an instrument. Pray describe it!"

"But it is *so* simple; any school-boy can explain it to you," he said, with feigned indifference.

"But how can such a marvel be accomplished?" I insisted, carried away by curiosity.

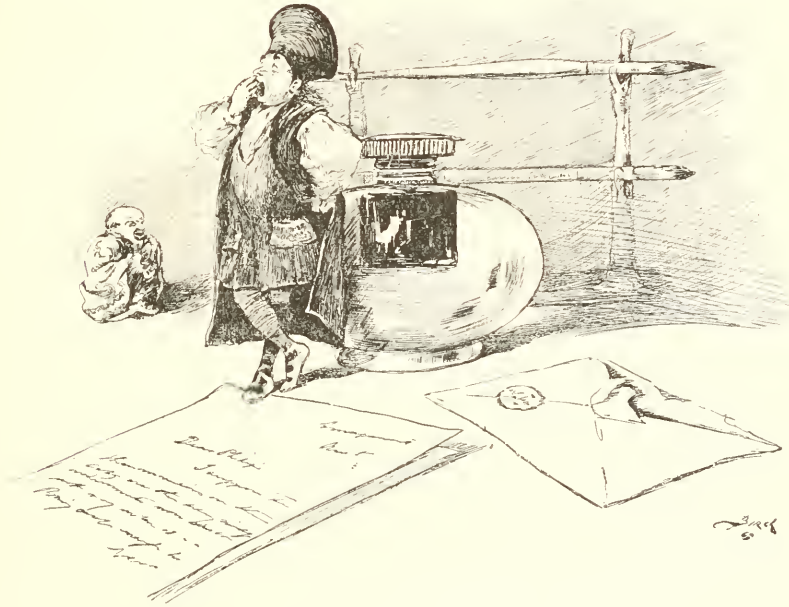
"Do you really mean to say you never heard of it?" he inquired in a drawling tone, designed, I thought, to annoy me.

"Never! And I would give anything to understand it!"

He seemed amused by my eagerness, and, smiling indulgently, continued in the same tone: "Why, that is a trifle—a mere toy compared with the wonderful Angertort Tube. Now, that is what I should call an *invention*!"

"What! Another discovery of which I have never heard? The Angertort Tube, did you say? When were these inventions made?"

"I believe it was during the third century, before the second great Migration, but for exactness I shall have to refer you to the school-books. I never was good at dates. However, it does n't matter; these were but the first-fruits of the revival of science — when chemismication first superseded steam and electricity."



"HE PRETENDED TO YAWN."

This was too much. "Steam and electricity superseded? They are yet in their infancy with us!"

"Oh," he replied, laughing, "you are far behind the times. We disused both as soon as we learned to control dynamic atomicity."

"You must be ages in advance of us. I beg you to explain some of these marvels to me."

"I have other occupations," said he, roguishly, "and, to my great

regret, they will prevent my tutoring you in the A B C's of science. You must think me very obliging!" and he arose, put his hands in



““YOU CAN GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM!””

his trousers-pockets, and sauntered away across the table, whistling softly to himself.

I lost my temper.

“You cantankerous little midget, you will answer my questions or I'll send you back where you came from!”

He turned sharply upon me, and exclaimed:

"You great hulking booby, do you expect me to bore myself by giving lessons in primary science to a cross-grained, disobliging fellow who will not take the trouble to tell me who excited the states, who Shakespeare is, or to read me even one of his plays? No, sir! YOU KEEP YOUR SECRETS AND I 'LL KEEP MINE. As to going back where I came from, I would be glad to rid you of my presence instantly — if only I knew how."

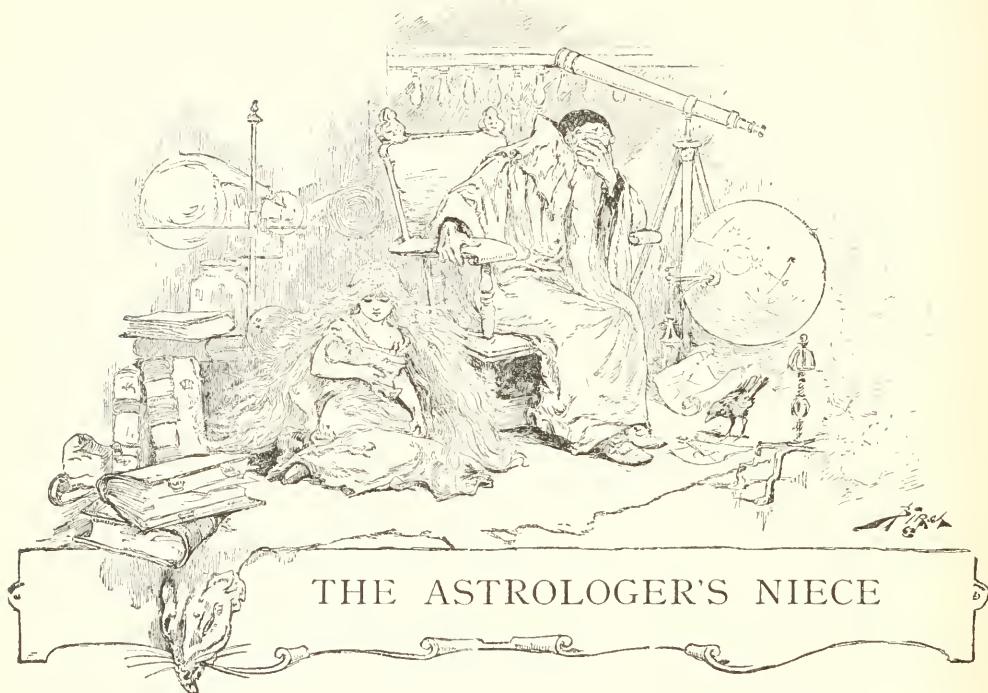
"I'll try it, anyhow!" I cried, so angry that I hardly knew what I said. "You came out of my microscope, and into it you shall go again!" I caught him up, dropped him into the tube, screwed on the top, and was pleased to see the little black spot reappear in the disk. Opening the window, I threw out the disk, and was amazed to see that, instead of falling, it floated away through the motionless air like a piece of thistle-down before a summer breeze. It soon left the area of light coming from my window, and was lost to view.

"Aha!" I said, with deep satisfaction. "Now you can go back where you came from!"

I sat down beside my table, and, as my anger cooled, began to think it all over. At first I felt great relief to be rid of the little pest, who fretted me by his pertinacity and piqued my self-esteem by his air of superiority.

But gradually my temper cooled, and as I recovered my sane judgment I began to reflect that ordinary civility to the little manikin might have induced him to tell me enough to have secured me fame and fortune, or even to have made me a benefactor to my whole race; and I felt bitter shame that my ill humor and foolish pride had caused me pettishly to throw away an opportunity greater than had ever been granted to any human being.

Still, he was so provoking and so altogether irritating that I am inclined to think you yourself would have done very much the same.



THE ASTROLOGER'S NIECE

I AM not sorry that I became an astrologer. The work is monotonous but not wearing, and the hours are short. As an apprentice I was a hard student, and frequently consulted the stars; but now, without conceit, I think I speak within bounds in saying that I know all there is to know about planets, stars, asteroids, comets, nebulae, and horoscopes, and twice as much as any other astrologer of my weight; so I seldom refresh my memory by going, through my telescope, directly to nature.

I admit it is inconvenient to be obliged to wear a thick woolen robe on warm days. I also admit that a shorter beard would be

less in my way, and that I might shave if my customers did not object. I do not deny that my raven, a second-hand bird which once belonged to Zadkiel, is a nuisance, because of his continually stealing my spectacles. As I have only one pair, it is very hard to find them when I have no spectacles to find them with. The bird is not sympathetic, and enjoys my annoyance over the search; croaking derisively as I go stumbling around among dusty old books and brittle glass crucibles. This irritates me; and I put him on bread and water, which irritates him.

My calculations are a bore; and I am very apt to pinch my fingers or entangle my beard in the celestial globe. My customers are greedy, and insist upon being kings, duchesses, pirates, and so on, ignoring the indications which plainly show them to be intended for hurdy-gurdy players, scissors-grinders, or poets. The planets are all right; I have no particular fault to find with the fixed stars; but those vagabonds, the comets, will often act in the most unfriendly way,—spoiling my very best combinations. It makes customers ill-natured, and they hold me responsible, just as though I arranged the comets to suit myself! Perhaps it is not strange that I am a trifle touchy; I feel sure astrologers will agree that I am no more nervous than is excusable under the trials of the profession. Still, I repeat, I am satisfied with my vocation. I did hesitate between star-gazing and saw-filing; but I think my choice was not unwise; for, as an astrologer, I became more or less familiar with magic,—a pleasant recreation if pursued with proper discretion, but not fit for children. While I lived alone, I had no trouble with it; for although I made mistakes, I was indulgent enough to overlook them.

But when my only sister unfortunately died and left a lovely little daughter alone in the world, whom nobody else could be persuaded to adopt, I foolishly consented to bring up that child.

It was an amiable, even admirable, weakness — but, my stars ! what curious things a child can do !

I had had no kindergarten experience. I was never in an orphan asylum, so far as I know, and I was an only son. I knew nothing of children, except such superficial acquaintance as enabled me to foretell their futures and to advise parents about bringing them up ; and yet in my old age I was thus, by an accident, forced to take full charge of a small girl of very decided traits—born with Jupiter in the ascendant, and Mercury not far off ! What bothered me most was her goodness. A bad child can be coaxed and punished ; but

an affectionate, mischievous, obedient, and innocent girl—what *can* be done with her ?

I never thought of locking up my books of magic—and she must have read them, I suppose ; for, before I knew it, that youngster was working spells and charms, fixing up enchantments, and making transformations which required more time to disentangle than I could readily spare from my business hours.

The first disagreeable experience resulted from her having read about some old flyinghorse in Greece, Turkey, or elsewhere, and she took to wandering about the fields keeping a



MY NIECE'S EXPERIMENT IN MAGIC.

bright lookout for him ! I suspect she became discouraged, and resolved to make one for herself, since she caught a little colt, fixed a pair of wings by some spell or other upon the colt's shoulders, and attempted to harness him with flowers ; whereupon he flew away ! It could n't

have displeased the colt, for he was not at all sedate in character. But the farmer who owned him did not think of that. He came to see me about it, thoughtlessly bringing his pitchfork with him; so I found it best to promise to remove the wings. Luckily, she had left the book open at the very charm that had been used, and I was able to undo it; though there was some delay, caused by the necessity of using a lock of hair from the head of the Sultan, who was kind enough to grow one for me as soon as he could.

Now that child did n't mean any harm; she could n't see why a horse should n't fly,—the little goose!—nor could I explain it to her very clearly. She promised, however, not to do so again, and of course we said no more about it.

The week after, coming home one day, I found my room filled to the brim, so to speak, with an enormous green dragon, who blew smoke from his nostrils so profusely that it gave me some trouble to convince the villagers that there was no fire and that they were nuisances, with their buckets and ladders!

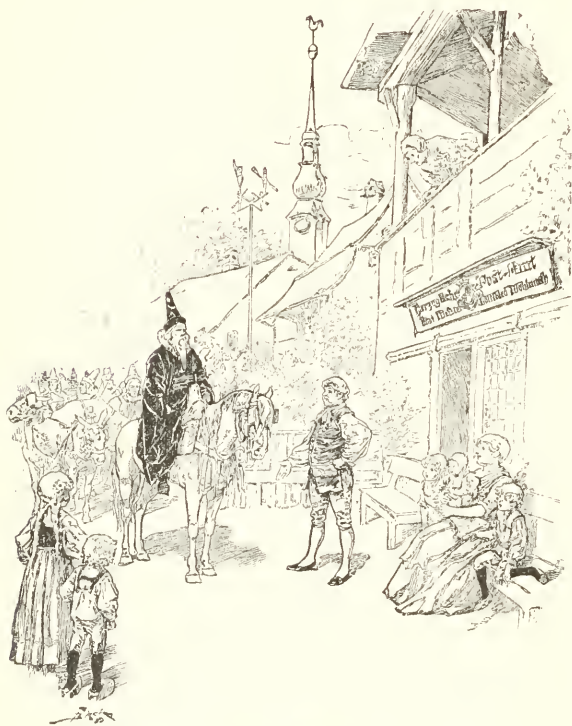
Of course my magic-books were inaccessible, and we took lodgings with a neighbor until the dragon was starved out. The dragon's skin made an excellent rug, but the experience was not enjoyable. I could not reprove my niece for this, because she explained very frankly that she had made the dragon larger than she intended; it was only a misfit.

You may think me absent-minded; but it never occurred to me to forbid these practices, although, had I done so, she would have obeyed me. I forgot about it, except when some new prank brought the matter to my mind, and then I became absorbed in remedying the difficulty caused by her experiment. Once I tried to divert her mind by inducing her to adopt a doll which the raven had cleverly secured from somebody; but her care of it was so

evidently due to a desire to please me that whenever she held it I was uneasy. When the raven took the doll away again (let us hope, to return it), we were both relieved.

For a time after the dragon incident, my niece was shy of using the magic-books, and I enjoyed this quiet interval very much. I was occupied in manufacturing a horoscope for the innkeeper, who

was quite well-to-do. He had promised me a round sum for a favorable sketch of his future, and I was anxious to give satisfaction and to collect my bill. But the stars indicated that only the strictest economy would tide him over a coming financial crisis in his affairs—which made me fear there might be some uncertainty about my fee. Absorbed in this perplexity, I may have neglected my niece; at all events, she got into the habit of spending her time with the innkeeper's family.



ARRIVAL OF THE COMMERCIAL MAGICIAN.

great dignity and little importance, chanced to arrive at the inn while my niece was there. Overhearing his negotiation with the landlord, she learned, through the foolish talkativeness of the magician, that

A commercial magician from Lapland, of

the long and imposing train of mules and other companions accompanying him were not, in reality, what they appeared to be, but were simply his performing company of manufactured hallucinations disguised in their traveling shapes. Imagine the effect upon the curious and ingenuous mind of my playful niece! The heedless magician, with equal carelessness, left his wand upon the table in the front hall, where anybody could reach it. You can foresee the result.

It must have been merely by chance that she succeeded in counteracting the spell by which these creatures were confined to their every-day forms. However that may be, you may imagine what happened while the magician was at dinner that afternoon. The inquiring spirit of childhood led my niece to make trial of the wand, when, of course, the mules and attendants returned to their original shapes and flew off, a buzzing swarm of bees! I was walking in the village, and as soon as I saw the swarm I understood what had happened, and must admit I was amused.

When I arrived at the inn, the magician was discontented. He failed to appreciate the child's ingenuity and enterprise, and really seemed inclined to speak hastily to the poor girl, who stood looking on with an innocent pleasure in her success, which I found charming. But, since I was there, he only stared helplessly about and seemed anxious to say more than he could wait to pronounce, till I told him that he must have patience and fortitude. As he came to his senses, he showed signs of knowing what to do. He sent for the pepper-casters and vinegar-cruets, neatly changed them into divining-boxes, which straightway poured forth the proper necromantic fumes, and then—remembered that he needed his wand! A long search resulted in finding it up the kitchen chimney, after which a careful and laborious cleansing brought it into a suitable condition to be handled. All this my niece greatly enjoyed.

By that time, the magician was very much irritated and began a powerful invocation to a muscular spirit who would, perhaps, have brought the whole party back, in a jiffy!—but I interfered, and ex-



THE MAGICIAN BEGAN A POWERFUL
INVOCATION.

plained to him, at some length, that the whole episode was nothing more than a piece of girlish curiosity, not calling for any harsh methods or severe measures. I offered my assistance, which he declined,—without thanks. I shrugged my shoulders and was strolling indifferently away when he began to make an answer. I saw that he had not an easy command of language.

“What nonsense!—such a fix I ’m in!—Girlish curiosity?—Where do you think that pack of irresponsible insects has gone?—

I hope they will—Please get away!” I withdrew. It was not my affair, but they told me that my niece, inadvertently I am sure, had injured the wand so that it failed to work, and that the magician made futile attempts to use it, until the boys laughed at him, when he desisted. Having lost all his attendants, materials, and supplies, and his wand being useless, the magician was almost distracted. He was unable to leave the village, and the landlord would n’t have him at the inn, so I took him to board on credit, at a reasonable charge.

When the magician took up his abode with me, my niece was somewhat fond of questioning him, but apparently found that it was not worth her time, for she seemed to lose interest in this very

soon. In fact, she forgot all about him, and about me as well, and became entirely absorbed in an attempt to teach the raven to play jack-stones — for which recreation he showed very little talent. As there was, necessarily, considerable noise in her course of instruction, I requested her to hold the sessions out of doors, and she kindly adopted the suggestion.

In order to occupy the magician's mind, I gave him some copying, but he was n't interested in his work. He was restless, and wandered out into the country searching high and low for the curious crowd of nondescripts which my careless niece had liberated in a praiseworthy attempt to gain knowledge. I called his attention to this view of the subject, and asked whether he did not see it in the same light, but I must say he was quite unreasonable and prejudiced. He left the room abruptly, forgetting his hat, leaving the door wide open, and his quill-pen behind his ear. He was gone for some time. In the afternoon he came back radiant, crying aloud: "I have found them—I have found them!" and dancing with joy. His dancing was very good, but I was busy and paid no attention to him. If he had been a man of any tact, he would have felt my indifference; but some people cannot take a hint, and he went on as eagerly as though I had shown some interest in the performance.

"As I was walking in the meadows," he shouted, "I nearly tripped over the body of a peasant lying flat upon the ground, studying an ant-hill with a magnifying-glass. I asked him what he was doing, and he told me that he was The Sluggard, and that he had been advised to go to the ants and



THE SLUGGARD, CONSIDERING.

consider their ways and be wise. I inquired how he was getting on; he said he was getting on very well, that he had learned to gather all he could, to store it up where it would be safe, and to keep in out of the wet."

This bored me extremely, and I coughed significantly, but the magician continued rambling:

"I asked if I might look through the lens. He said I might, and I did. Now what do you suppose I saw through that lens?"

I had not recovered my good humor. I confess that I am sensitive and that my feelings are easily hurt. This foolish attempt to ask me rhetorical conundrums displeased me, and I made no reply. But that man was not discouraged. He repeated the question. Turning toward him, I spoke in a way he could not misunderstand.

"Upon applying your eye to the glass," I remarked, "you were astonished to perceive that the small creatures which you had supposed to be common black ants were in reality a colony of bees, who seemed, for some strange reason of their own, to have chosen an abandoned ant-hill for a hive! This anomaly seems not to have attracted your notice; but, if I had been with you, I could have informed you that you might have concluded from so very significant a fact that this was the swarm which you are so anxious to find. Does not reflection incline you to agree with me?"

He was disappointed. He had foolishly hoped to surprise me—such puerility! "You are right," he replied, in a muffled sort of voice.

"Very well," said I. "Now, in my turn, I will propose a question. Your wand being out of order, how are you to get those wanderers back?" I enjoyed his discomfiture. His face was a study, and I studied it until I learned that he had no suggestion to make. His face wore no expression whatever.

Then, in a kindly spirit, I said to him: "Bring me your little

wand. Sit down like a magician, and don't dance about like a dervish, and I'll fix it for you." He was visibly moved by my kindness, and agreed to all I proposed. He brought the wand, and, after a keen examination, I found a screw loose, and with my pen-knife I tightened it. A sickly smile flitted over his face. "You are doing me a good turn," he murmured. I gave him a searching glance; but the smile was so faint, and faded so quickly, that I decided he did not mean to be humorous. It was lucky for him, for astrologers are sworn foes to humorists; and I should have broken his wand into several fragments if I had detected the slightest levity. He said no more. Having mended the wand, I handed it to him, saying: "Go, recover your chattels!" He retired with briskness, and it gives me pleasure to record the fact that I have never seen him since.

My niece told me, casually, that she was glad that the magician was gone. I offered to tell her about his departure, but she assured me she took no interest in the subject. She did not say any more about it, and, since I do not believe in encouraging childish prattle, I made no more allusions to our boarder.

I have lately asked her whether she would prefer to qualify herself to study astrology, with magic as an extra, or would be better satisfied to learn saw-filing under some well-known virtuoso. She replied with much discretion, that she thought a quiet life was the happiest after all. So, although she has not yet expressed herself more definitely, I feel sure she is giving the subject mature consideration. I admire her greatly, and predict that she will do well if carefully neglected.

As time passes, I notice that I grow older; and, although I cannot repent having chosen the career of an astrologer, if my niece chooses the saw-filing business, I may perhaps take up some similar musical pursuit, so that we may not be separated. Meanwhile, my

niece is attending a very excellent school, and makes good progress in her studies. In fact her progress was so rapid at first, that she came near graduating in about two weeks; but, as I then persuaded her to give up the use of the magic-books, she is now making slower and more satisfactory progress, being quite backward.

The dust lies thick on the magic-books. Magic is amusing, but it sometimes makes trouble.

THE ASTROLOGER'S NIECE MARRIES

OF course, when she had finished her education, I thought my niece would be glad to stay quietly at home with me for a year or two at least. But she was of a restless disposition, and soon tired of the monotony of our quiet village life. I did my best to entertain her, and was even ingenious, I thought, in providing her with amusements. For instance, when a traveling circus came to a neighboring city, by the use of the well-known spell (Magic-Book VIII, chap. ii, §32) I caused the advance-agent to believe our village a populous city full of those persons of limited means who usually patronize the theater and the fine arts generally. As a result of my well-meant deception, he gave performances for a week to an audience consisting only of me, my niece, the innkeeper's family, and the innkeeper.

The performers, especially the ring-master, were furious, and thought the advance-agent was crazy. We did n't mind that, as he insisted upon completing the performances; but my niece found no pleasure in the show except as a means of amusing herself at the expense of those who took part in the ring. When one of the acrobats would leap into the air and begin to turn a somersault, she would secretly use some form of enchantment—for she had never forgotten the knowledge of the science picked up in her youth—and cause the poor fellow to remain hanging in the air upside down. This seriously interfered with the show, but the circus-people did not mind it very much until she carried her skylarking beyond all reason. But when

she made the trick-mule suddenly become as gentle as a lamb, and rode him around the ring, she sitting as placidly upon him as Queen Elizabeth upon a palfrey, and the trick-mule carrying her with a proudly angelic smile, and when she claimed the large reward the ring-master had offered — it was really too much.

With tears in his eyes the ring-master said it would ruin the circus to pay her, and so she let the reward go unpaid, on condition that they left at once. I concluded that she had lost interest in the hippodrome.

I tell this only as an instance of my unremitting efforts to supply her with pastimes of a really elevating character, and to show that it was not lack of diversion, but a restless disposition, which caused her to say she would go to seek her fortune.

I had no wish to leave home. My cook was an artist, and my house had a southern exposure and an astrological cupola of the most modern construction. So I told her flatly that I would not go under any consideration whatever.

We started the next morning. I suggested a sea route, as I was very susceptible to seasickness and desired above all things to go by land. She acquiesced at once, and we set sail early in a lug-rigged barker, or a bark-rigged lugger, one or the other, and as I went below I heard the captain order the crew to luff.

I cannot say what luffing is, because, when I came on deck again, we had been out for three days. It seemed longer, and I do not at all care for marine life — it interferes sadly with accuracy in astrological observations and with regularity of meals, both of which are hobbies of mine.

On the morning of the fifth day, one of the sailors said out loud, "Land hoe!" and I concluded he was an agriculturist, but had n't time to verify this conclusion because my niece insisted upon being rowed ashore at once. I was not ready to go ashore, but she preferred not to go alone, and so we went together.

As we rowed into a beautiful bay surrounded by the customary palm-trees, a sentinel on shore said, "Boat ahoy!"

I answered pleasantly, "Boat ahoy."

"What boat is that?" he inquired.

"It's just an ordinary boat," I answered.

"What boat is it?" he asked again.

"I'm sure I don't know," said I. "What do you want to know for?"

"If you don't answer the hail, I'll fire on you!" he said sternly.

"I'm answering as fast as I can," I replied good-naturedly. "What do you expect me to say?"

At this he raised his crossbow and leveled it (I think that is the technical term employed by military men) at the boat,—in fact, at me.

"Come ashore!" he cried in a peremptory tone.

"We are coming," I answered. He seemed very obtuse and unreasonable, but I make it a point never to quarrel with soldiers on duty. We landed at a little neat quay, and were received by the comrades of the conversationalist with the crossbow.

They surrounded us in a very attentive way and said, "Forward, march!"

We started. I was a trifle uneasy about our destination, and ventured to inquire of my niece where she thought we were going. She admitted that she did n't know, and added languidly that she did n't feel like talking. So on we went in silence for about half an hour. Then I asked the captain of the guard,—I knew he was the captain because he would n't keep step,—and he told me we were going to the Palace. I asked whether it was far. He said it was about as far as any place he ever saw, and suggested that I should keep my breath for walking. I despise useless taciturnity, but followed his advice under protest. We walked on for another half-hour,

and then just as I had concluded to refuse further pedestrianism, we saw in the distance several minarets from the top of which pennants were rippling in the breeze.

"That 's the Palace," said the captain.



"WE CAME TO A GATE GUARDED BY TWO ETHIOPIANS IN FANCY DRESS."

In a few minutes we came to a lofty wall, and a gate guarded by two Ethiopians in fancy dress, each carrying a curved sword.

"Your sword is bent, my friend," I said to one of them.

He scowled and looked uneasily at it.

"Why don't you have a straight one? — it would reach farther," I went on, "and it is really curious why so many of the Eastern nations prefer —"

I was interrupted. He tried to cut my head off, and if he had used a straight sword would have succeeded. I dodged him, remarking, without loss of dignity, "You see, now, that illustrates what —"

My niece here pulled me by my robe, and I dropped the subject. They rolled up the gate, a kind of portcullis, and we entered. I should like to describe the courtyard in detail, but as I had left my spectacles at home, having forgotten them in our hasty embarkation, I could not see anything but a confused blur of colors.

Going up some very tiresome stairways, we were led into a vast audience-room and brought before a kind of king or something — one of those men who sit on fancy chairs and order people around.

"Whom have you brought before us?" asked this very consequential individual.

"Lord of —" began the captain in a second-tenor voice.

"Tut, tut!" said the King. "Who are they?"

"Royal and Imperial —" said the captain.

"And so forth," rejoined the monarch; "thanks! Who are they?"

"I don't know," said the captain.

"Where from?" said the King.

"I don't know," said the captain.

"What do they want?" asked the King.

"I don't know," answered the officer.

"Enough," said the King, hastily; "we are satisfied that your specialty is honest ignorance. We appoint you Court Historian."

The captain bowed low.

"Return to your post for the present; and forget as much as you

can until you are called upon to assume your new duties." The captain withdrew.

"Now," said the King to me, "who are you?"

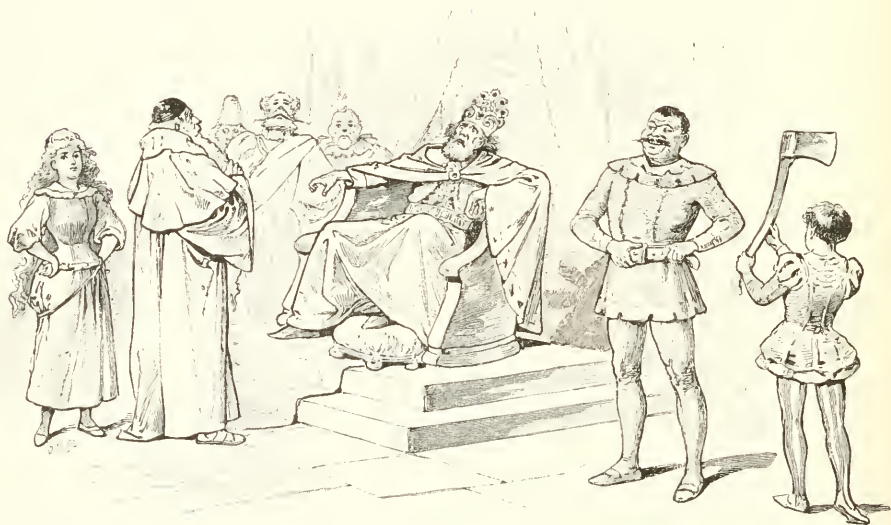
"An astrologer, your Highness," I answered with some natural pride.

"A star-gazer, eh?" he said pleasantly. "Well, what did you come here for?"

"I don't know," I answered after a moment's reflection.

The King seemed vexed.

"Does anybody know anything about anything in particular?" he



"‘DOES ANYBODY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR?’ ASKED THE KING."

asked with fine sarcasm. It made me shake in my sandals, especially as the headsman, who was standing beside the King, here tightened his belt and took a large and shiny ax from a page at his left.

But, as usual, my niece came to the rescue, and said, in her quiet and unpretending way, that she knew considerable about

several things. The headsman looked at her very keenly, handed the ax back to the page, and said in a low tone that he was going out to luncheon. He went.

"Well, well," said the King. "Suppose you tell us about this?"

To my surprise my niece said that she had come to his kingdom to marry the prince.

Naturally the King was a little put out. It seemed sudden to him, no doubt. I am sure it did to me. He was lost in thought for a few moments, and then said absently:

"Oh!—yes. Well, where's—the—the headsman?"

"Gone to luncheon, your Majestic Majesty," answered the page.

"Very inconvenient," said the King, looking annoyed. "He's never here when he's needed. No matter. This amuses us. We find this novel and—yes—amusing in a way. We must get sport from this. Young woman," said he to my niece, "if you can sit down for a few moments, the executioner will be back, and he will attend to you first. The astrologer can afford to give you precedence. He won't have long to wait. The audience is over. I'll be at the executions this afternoon."

"Long live the King!" cried the crowd.

Then a brass band struck up "Pop Goes the Weasel," and the audience-room was emptied. Soon we were alone with the guards. They had no captain, and seemed at a loss to know what to do next. My niece sat in a very comfortable chair playing a curious game which she invented herself. It was a round box with little partitions in it, and four or five marbles rolling around between them. She would try to make the marbles roll into a little box in the center. She seemed much amused by it. It appeared stupid to me. I wondered how long we should have to wait there. The noise of the marbles made me nervous.

At this moment the captain, or rather the Court Historian, came in.

"Shoulder arms!" he said sharply. The men obeyed. "Conduct the prisoners to the donjon!" he went on.

"This is all right," I said. "I suppose you know your own business. But it seems to me that you are acting queerly for a Court Historian!"

"It is all right," he said. "I have forgotten all about that. So has the King. Forward march!"

We were escorted to the donjon.

Don't ever go to a donjon if you can help it. We stayed there the rest of the day. I was looking through the bars, and my niece said nothing until late in the afternoon. Then she told me she had got them all in.

"You have got *us* all in," I said, with bitter meaning. She laughed.

After a while the guards came and told us to prepare for instant execution. I pointed out the illogical absurdity of "preparing for *instant* execution," but they could n't see it, and, as it only annoyed them and set them to talking about some "old crank," I saw they cared more for mechanics than for logic, and said nothing further. What a number of dull people there are in foreign climes!

We followed them along some very damp corridors which needed whitewashing, and soon came to a large plaza. I could not see very well, but I heard many voices saying, "Here they come!" "Bring them out!" "See the old fogy!"—by which they must have meant the captain, I suppose.

It suddenly occurred to me that possibly they meant to execute me and my niece. My mind sometimes will grasp an idea with breathless celerity. It was an annoying experience, and I resolved to avoid the scaffold, if it were possible to do so without loss of dignity or the family prestige.

"My dear child," said I to my niece, "has it occurred to you that they have invited us out to an afternoon execution, and that they mean to chop *our* heads off?"

She admitted that they seemed to think they were, but begged me to give myself no uneasiness, promising to see that no harm came of our little pleasure-excursion. Young girls are so rash!—but my niece always takes me with her.

"But what is this absurdity about a prince?" I asked.

She said it was no absurdity at all. That she had come to marry the prince, and would marry the prince—if she liked his looks.

"Have n't you seen him?" I asked in some surprise.

She shook her head, and then assured me again that I need not be uneasy—that the whole journey was her own plan, and she felt sure of its ultimate success. It is not profitable to argue with a person who pays no attention to what you say, and who never on any account does anything you think it best to do, so I said no more.

Amid renewed jeers, we climbed the steps to the scaffold.

The headsman was waiting for us. His ax looked very large to me, but he seemed strong enough to handle it. The King was there, and was plainly in a hurry to get away, for he said with some attempt at pleasantry:

"Now, then, Headsman, here 's the young lady who wishes to marry the prince. Off she goes,—and then for the old star-gazer!"

I thought his remarks were not in the best of taste. They put my niece's head upon the block, the headsman raised his ax, and the ax-head immediately flew off in the form of a black crow, saying, "Caw!"

The headsman looked after it with much interest.

"Never," said he with emphasis, "in the whole course of my professional experience, did I *ever* see anything like that."

"My niece," I said, "is certainly not an ordinary girl. You'll all admit that, I am sure, when you have known her as long as I have."

The headsman sent the page for another ax. The people waited in silence, hardly knowing what had taken place. The King seemed to enjoy the experience. It was something new, and kings (at least all the kings I know) are terribly bored, and fond of novelty. He clapped his hands and called out, "Brava!"

The crowd separated at one point and the page arrived with the spare ax. The headsman handled it with the caressing hand of an artist, poised it lightly in the air, and brought it down with a swish upon my niece's swanlike neck. I had a swanlike neck when younger.

"Huzza!" cried the hireling crowd. But they had shouted too soon. As the keen edge neared her golden ringlets, the ax-head left the handle and becoming a garland of flowers encircled her neck in a really effective manner. I could not but admire the esthetic value of the colors against her fair skin. Old men are somewhat forgetful, and I do not distinctly recall whether I have mentioned my niece's beauty. It is a family characteristic, and in my young days I was universally admitted to be the handsomest astrologer in our parish.

The King had by this time lost his temper. "He had come out," as he remarked in high dudgeon, "to see an execution—not to witness an exhibition of legerdemain!" (His choice of language was always excellent, by the way.) So now he rose to his feet, and ordered the guards to seize the prisoners.

The guards were arranged in a hollow square around the scaffold, and at the word of command they pointed some very jagged halberds and other painful poking instruments in our direction. I looked at my niece with some misgiving, but apparently she was quite able to take care of herself. She stood up also, and pro-

nounced some magical words. I do not really know just what they were. In fact, she had rather gone ahead of me in the text-books, and could do a number of things which I should not like to attempt. Probably, if I had been in her situation, I should have disappeared from view, or changed myself into a humming-bird or a dragon-



THE ROYAL GUARDS SURROUND THE ASTROLOGER'S NIECE.

fly,—something with wings, you know,—and soared gently away into the blue ether. But she was not satisfied with ordinary magical charms. She took most of hers from the Appendix in the back of the book, and usually aimed at the more picturesque methods.

This time I heard her silvery laugh, and I looked with curiosity at the advancing guards. When they began their short march they were veterans. After a few steps they became recruits. A few steps more, and they were cadets, and so it went on. They became boys and then toddlers; and finally, when they reached the foot of the platform, they were babies, creeping on all fours and crying and cooing.

Those babes in uniform were very ridiculous. After a great shout of laughter, some of the women in the crowd picked up the helpless infants and bore them away in their arms. I afterward learned that the foundling asylum was much overcrowded that night.

This last experience seemed to open the King's eyes to the peculiarities of my niece's disposition. He realized that she must be coaxed rather than driven. I do not mean to say he told me so, for in all the course of our acquaintance we did not exchange a dozen words. He called me the "star-gazer," and seemed to think me rather a fussy old fellow. Perhaps he was right,—my horoscope indicated something of the kind.

The populace had now run away, and the King and a few courtiers came to the foot of the platform and invited us to come to the Palace and make ourselves at home. The King offered his arm to my niece, and she took it with an ease of manner which she inherited from her grandfather. My father was a sorcerer, and of the very best school. All his house-work was done by familiars, and genii did the farm-work and ran errands.

When the King had escorted my niece and her uncle to the private audience-room, we sat down to a very well-served table, and then the King and my niece came to an understanding. I heard only the last part of the conversation.

"You cannot marry my son!" said the King, decidedly. "It's against all precedent."

My niece said in her winning way that she did n't care a button for precedent, and that several great men had called attention to the fact that there could n't be a precedent for anything the first time it was done.

"I won't argue," said the King; "but I will only say, I forbid it."

Then, to my secret amusement, my niece said very sweetly, as



"‘THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS!’ SAID THE DUCK IN A RAGE.”

she toyed with a sprig of celery, that she was not fond of argument herself, and therefore would only say that she would then and there turn the king into a canvasback duck, unless he consented to the wedding.

"I defy you!" said the King.

My niece clapped her hands, and he became a canvasback duck.

"This is preposterous!" said the duck in a rage.

My niece giggled.

"It is monstrous!" said the duck, walking bow-legged around the table.

I joined in the mirth. "Star-gazer," indeed!

"It is high treason!" insisted the royal fowl.

My niece rose from the table. The duck looked at her in perplexity. Then he said:

"I give in. Please fix me straight again."

She clapped her hands, and he regained his shape.

"Now," said he uneasily, "I am a man — of my word. Send for my son."

Several admirals, dukes, and footmen started for the door, but the seneschal had a good lead, and soon returned, ushering in a young man whose physical perfections were not noticed only because of his graceful bearing and exquisite air of high breeding and royal intelligence. When I saw him I had a curious remembrance of having seen him before. But it was a mistake. I was thinking of a certain beautiful miniature of myself, which my father had given me on my twenty-first birthday.

"Come in," said the King pleasantly. "This, my son, is your promised bride. She is the niece of this old gentleman. He is a star-gazer. Bow to your uncle-in-law. The wedding will take place to-morrow. Good evening, young people. Good evening, star-gazer."

He retired through the cloth-of-gold portière, and the prince, by his courtly bearing, soon put us all at our ease. At first his manner, while with my niece, was just a trifle constrained; but at 12.45 A. M., when I went to bed, they had eaten twelve philopenas and had ordered the yawning butler to bring more almonds.

Next morning a grand procession set forth for the cathedral.

I, however, with her permission, remained at home and watched the event through my second-best magic telescope, with which one can look around two corners and through a thin stone wall.

I will briefly describe what took place. The King must have spent the night in plotting mischief, for he had gathered together a large army, and secured the services of several witches, enchanters, exorcists, and so on. Just as the ceremony was to be performed, these myrmidons surrounded the bridal party and attempted to seize my niece. I was not alarmed, for I had much confidence in her presence of mind and her readiness of resource in emergencies.

Just as they gathered around her, she began to grow larger. Soon she increased so enormously that she took the prince up in one hand, put him under her arm, and walked in a leisurely way down the aisle. He did not seem to object. In fact, he had previously done his best to protect her, and had knocked down one witch with her own broomstick early in the proceedings.

Still my niece continued to grow. She rose to the top of the cathedral, put her golden ringlets through the roof, and the slates began to tumble upon the people below. How they scattered!

At this moment the King begged for pardon, and promised reformation and acquiescence—at least I judged so from his attitude. Upon the disappearance of the rabble, my niece regained her proper size; and after the wedding-party was brought together again, she became a lovely bride, shrinking and tender.

When the bridal couple came down the aisle, they were beautiful. I threw down the glass and hastened to meet them at the palace gate.

The prince seemed very happy, and so did the princess—my niece. I felt that I was safe in leaving her to her husband's care, and I set sail the next day for home.

I have received a letter from her since. It told many particu-

lars of her new life, and described her husband's flawless character and disposition at some length. This was the postscript:

P. S.—Jack says (John is my husband's name—one of them) that magic is beneath the dignity of a married woman. I think so, too, and have promised to give it up, maybe. The King is an old duck—not a canvasback, you know. He sends his love to the “star-gazer.”

I feel lonely without her. One could not be long dull in her company. Astrology, too, is not what it once was—there is too much cutting of rates and competition.

May my dear niece be happy, for certainly she married the man of her choice!

THE WINNING OF VANELLA

MY father was a rich merchant, and I naturally expected that he would give me enough to insure me a fair start in life. Consequently, after the celebration of my twenty-first birthday, I was not surprised when he told me that he wished to hold a serious conversation with me in his study. I found him sitting upon his favorite green silk divan.

He motioned to me to be seated.

"My son," he began, "it is time you chose your career."

"Most true, Parent revered," was my answer.

"Unfortunately," he went on, "the pirates have lately captured six of my largest galleys loaded with emeralds, topazes, and notions, and I shall be unable to provide for you as I wished to do. But the money, which it seems was fated to be lost, would have been only a disappointment, and you can now show me what you are capable of doing by your unaided efforts."

"It is an excellent opportunity," I agreed.

"Your brothers, as you know, have already attempted to cope with the world."

"I know," I assented.

"But hitherto I have not told you of their fortunes. The King of a neighboring country seeks a husband for his only daughter, and promises to abdicate as soon as he has found a suitable son-in-law for the place."

"What sort of a son-in-law does his Majesty desire?"

"He does n't say. Both of your excellent brothers have returned to me for enough to make a new start in life, after having failed to win the hand of this princess."

"Did they tell you of their experiences?" I inquired with natural curiosity.

"Only in the most general terms," my father answered, smiling grimly at his own thoughts. "They told me that each candidate had certain tasks to perform, and agreed to leave the country forever if unsuccessful."

"And my brothers failed?"

"At the first task," said my father.

"Which was, perhaps, difficult?"

"Difficult, you may well say. It was to bring from the Hereditary Khan of Bijoutery, a proud and warlike chieftain, his most cherished bit of bric-à-brac, a goblet containing three priceless amethysts, given to him by a descendant of Haroun Alraschid. The Princess thinks she would like to have the jewels set in her *bonbonnière*."

"Pardon me, Papa," said I, "but I do not know that Frankish term."

"It is an outlandish name for a candy-box," said my father, who was simplicity itself.

"Could not my brothers obtain this little favor for the gentle Princess?" was my comment.

"They escaped with their lives only by the merest accident," said he. "The eldest made a midnight visit to the Khan's jewel-room, was discovered and leaped into the moat, some fifty parasangs below, if my memory be what it was; and then he swam four leagues, according to his own estimate, before rising to the surface for air."

"And the second?"

“Formed an alliance with a Cossack leader, and made war upon the Khan. But the Khan defeated them in seven pitched battles, and that discouraged your brother so that he returned home.”

“Hearty commiserations for my brothers’ misfortunes!” I said, after a few moments spent in reflection. “And the Princess—is she beautiful, that she inspires such courage and resolution?”

“The Princess Vanella is an exceedingly nice girl,” said my father. “She is graceful, respectful to her elders, plays upon the lute like a true daughter of the desert, makes excellent muffins, and has the happiest disposition (next to that of your lamented mother) I have ever known. She is worthy of your highest ambition. To win her hand would be happiness, even should you thereafter lose the kingdom that goes with her. And those realms, my son,” added my father, with a sigh, “are always slipping through one’s fingers!”

In silence I waited my father’s recovery from his emotion. My loved parent had lost several kingdoms already—not by his fault, but through misfortune. From our earliest days my mother taught us never to remind Papa of the thrones that were once his. She was always considerate.

“Why should I not undertake this adventure in my turn?” I asked soon after.

“So I asked your brothers; but they were inclined to ridicule the idea.”

“‘Ultimate ridicule is most satisfactory,’” I suggested, quoting a proverb of my native land.

“No doubt,” my father agreed, nodding his great white turban. “Really, your chances are excellent. The fairy stories are all in your favor. You are the third son, and I have nothing to give you; your elder brothers have failed, and scorn your desire to attempt the tasks. You will, when you go, have only your father’s blessing—which I will furnish. All seems favorable. But are you stupid

enough? There I cannot help you. The true stupidity is natural, not acquired."

"I will be as stupid as I can," said I, with proud humility. "The lovely Princess Vanella shall be mine. I am enchanted with her already. She shall be mine."

"Enough!" said my father; and I withdrew.

In a few days I started, with my father's blessing, carrying all my possessions in a silk handkerchief slung from a stout staff. Upon my way I kept a sharp lookout for old men with bundles of fagots too heavy for their strength, aged women asking alms, and, in fact, for all unattractive wayfarers; for I knew that fairies were likely to take such forms.

And my vigilance was rewarded. At the first cross-roads I saw an ancient beggar crone hurling stones at a tree with more earnestness than aim.

"What seekst thou, honest dame?" I inquired in an anxious tone, as a rock avoided the tree and came most marvelously close to my right ear.

"Alas! my best bonnet has flown on the zephyr's wing, and roosts in yon tree," she replied, poising another boulder.

Resolved to stop the bombardment at any cost, I spoke hastily:

"Nay, pelt not the shrub! Care thou for my burden, and I will scale the branches and rescue the errant triumph of the milliner's art!"

My language was romantic in those days, perhaps too romantic, for she failed to catch my meaning, and waved the stone uneasily.

"Hold on!" I said. "Drop the rock, and I'll get the bonnet. If you hit it, you might smash all the style out of it."

My praise of her bonnet was not unpleasant to her, for when I brought it she said gratefully:

"You are a noble youth. I have little with which to reward you; but give me the pen and inkhorn that dangles from your belt, and a

bit of parchment. I can write you a line that may aid you in time of need."

Convinced that she was a fairy, I obeyed. She wrote a few words in a crabbed hand, and advised me to read them when I was in need of counsel.

"Give you good day, fair youth," said she, courteously.



"‘FARE THEE WELL, GENTLE DAME,’ I REPLIED.”

"Fare thee well, gentle dame," I replied, removing my left slipper, which is a token of respect in my native land.

I met with but one other adventure on my way to the Khan's palace. I rescued an emerald-green parrot from a cat, and seeing no dwelling near carried the pretty creature with me.

On the eighth day after leaving my father's house, I was ushered by two gorgeous guards into the courtyard of the palace where the beautiful Vanella dwelt. My heart beat rapturously, and I felt so

young, so brave, and so strong that I feared neither the King nor his people.

I happened to arrive just when the King was holding audience, and he was graciously pleased to see me without more than three or four hours' delay in the anteroom.

When the curtained doorway was opened I advanced into the audience-hall and saw — Vanella!

For seventeen minutes I saw nothing but the Princess! In fact, the guards had just been ordered to show me out as a dumb and senseless wanderer, when I came to myself, and began to catch sight of the King dimly through the edges of the glory which in my eyes surrounded the Princess.

"Pardon, father of Vanella the peerless," said I, "the stupefaction of one who indeed knew your daughter to be beautiful, but had no idea what a pretty girl she was. I never saw any princess who can hold a rushlight to her; and it was very sudden. I am better now."

"We are glad you are better," said the King, "and hope you will soon be well enough to tell us what you wish."

"I have come to marry Her Effulgent Perfectness the Princess Vanella!"

"Yes?" said the King, with a slightly sarcastic air.

"Provided I can win her," I added. "And that we shall soon see."

I think the old man liked my courage. At all events, he called me to him, and presented me to the Princess. For he was a very sensible ruler and an indulgent father; and he had no idea of marrying his daughter to any man she did n't think worthy of her. So in all cases, permission had to be given by the Princess before the candidate could begin the ordeal. But so beautiful was Vanella, and so eager were the young nobility to win her hand, that they all looked handsome and daring when in her presence. I think I must have been attractive in those days, for Vanella says now that she never

admired me more than when I was first presented to her. It was love at first sight on both sides. In fact, after we had conversed a few minutes, the Princess told me that she was "sorry the tests were so *awfully* difficult, and she did n't care so *very* much about the goblet after all, though, of course she would *like* it, if it was n't *too much trouble* to get it."

"No trouble at all," said I. "I would get it for you, even if you did n't want it at all."



"HE CALLED ME TO HIM, AND PRESENTED ME TO THE PRINCESS."

She looked pleased and then frowned.

"I mean," I added hastily, "I'd get it if you wanted it, even if you did n't care whether I got it or not."

She seemed to understand me perfectly.

"I shall start after luncheon," I said. "And, before I go, is there

anything else of the Khan's that you 'd like? It 's no bother to me to get you the whole treasury if you 'd care for it."

"The goblet will do," she said, blushing charmingly, and looking at her father to see whether he was listening. He was n't.

"Papa," said Vanella, "it 's all right."

"Eh? What 's all right?"

"He 's going, after luncheon."

"Who is?"

"This young gentleman."

"Oh, yes," said the King. "Very well. I suppose he will get the goblet first. Yes? Well, then, good-by, my young friend. Good-by."

"Au revoir," I answered, in the Frankish mode.

"Can you not leave the parrot?" suggested Vanella. "I adore green parrots — of that particular shade of green, I mean!"

"With pleasure," I answered with a grateful glance. "May I ask you to allow it to remind you of me?"

"The color will help," said the King, a little maliciously, I thought. So I hurried away without further delay.

As there were no modern systems of rapid transit, I traveled speedily but comfortably toward Bijoutery, thinking so constantly of the Princess that I never reflected upon how I was to obtain possession of the goblet until I found myself upon the frontier. Then I was stopped by an outpost of the Khan's army.

"Who goes there?" he inquired, as he drew his bow and adjusted an arrow to the string.

"Goes where?" I asked, waking up from a brown study, for I was a little abstracted.

"Wherever you are going," he explained, lowering his bow.

"Why, I do, I suppose," I answered, a little annoyed by the question, which was absurd on the face of it.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked.

"I want to marry the Princess Vanella," I said, absent-mindedly.

"Why don't you, then?" the soldier inquired, smiling indulgently.

"She has sent me to get the Khan's goblet," I said, for I had no wish to go about the enterprise in any underhand manner.

"I did n't know he was going to send it to her," said the sentinel.

"Perhaps he won't after all," I said frankly.

"Maybe not," answered the soldier; "he thinks a great deal of it. But I suppose she would n't have sent you unless she thought he would let you have it. Would she, now?" he asked. He seemed to be proud of his cleverness.

"Well, she might," I said, cautiously, "But if he does n't care to give it to me, he can say so."

"So he can," said the soldier. "I wish you good luck."

Thanking him for his kindness, I went on my way. It did n't occur to me until afterward that the soldier thought I was a mere messenger sent by the Princess according to some arrangement between the Khan and herself.

Once within the frontier, I had no further difficulty until I reached the Khan's castle. I attributed my good fortune thus far to the fact that I had minded my own business. It is so much easier to go into a foreign country by yourself than it is to get in at the head of an army. My brother expected to be stopped, and he *was* stopped. I took it for granted that I could go in, and they let me in. It was very simple indeed.

Now another problem confronted me. Here was a strong castle built on a rocky promontory surrounded on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth defended by a lofty wall of hewn stone.

I went to the drawbridge gate and blew the trumpet.

"Hello! Who 's there?" said a gruff voice.

"It 's a gentleman to see the Khan," I said.

"Where is he?" asked the voice, through an iron lattice.

"I am the gentleman," I replied.

"Go away, boy!" said the voice, and the latticed window was shut. This was discouraging.

"What would the Princess say if she saw me now?" I thought, and then I returned to the gate and again winded the trumpet. No answer. I kept on winding the trumpet, but without result. At last, having blown so hard that I broke it, I was in despair.

I sat me down on the bank of the moat and threw stones into the water, with a strong desire to throw myself in after them.

Then I remembered the bit of parchment which the old woman had given me, and concluded it was time to use it. At first I hesitated, because I thought I should perhaps need the charm when I came to the other tasks which the King would set me. However, reasoning that I should never come to the second task until the first was performed, I drew out the bit of writing and read:

"IF YOU DON'T SEE WHAT YOU WANT, ASK FOR IT."

That was all it said. Bitterly disappointed, I flung it after the stones into the moat. But I could n't forget it. And as I began to think it over, I found the advice good.

"What is it I want to do?" I asked myself. "Why, to get at the Khan and his goblet." Now, the thing that stopped me was simply a stone wall and a locked gate; and I was n't anxious to get into the castle. I wanted to communicate with the gentleman of the house.

Nothing could be simpler. I still had my writing-materials, and in a few moments I had written a note and tossed it over the wall. It was as follows:

MOST NOBLE KHAN OF BIJOUTERY. SIR: I have broken the trumpet at the gate, and can't get an answer. I come directly from the Princess Vanella, who wishes the great goblet which is decorated with amethysts. What are you afraid of? I am only

a single young man without weapons, and promise not to hurt you. I await your answer. But if I do not receive some proper recognition within a reasonable time, I shall report your discourtesy to Princess Vanella and her royal father.

KABA BEN EPHRAF.

This letter was of course handed to the Khan as soon as it was picked up, and I was admitted at once to his presence.

He demanded an explanation of my letter, and I told him just how the matter stood.

"I did n't believe you would allow a paltry bit of glassware and jewelry to stand between a young man and happiness — especially when a lady had asked for it. In my own country we never refuse any reasonable request a lady makes; and, in spite of reports to the contrary, I knew you to be too brave and great a man to depend upon the possession of a few gems for your renown. So, instead of bringing an army, — which, of course, you could easily defeat, thus causing much trouble and distress, — I thought I would see what you wished to do about it."

The Khan said not a word during my explanation. Then taking the crystal goblet from the top of his sideboard, he handed it to me, saying:



"TAKING THE GOBLET FROM THE SIDEBOARD,
HE HANDED IT TO ME."

"Young man, you have my best wishes. You have acted like a gentleman in the whole matter. I believe your name is Kaba ben Ephraf, is n't it?"

I nodded.

"Well, was n't there a ben Ephraf whom I defeated a few months ago?"

"My brother," I explained.

"Yes, yes!" said the old gentleman. "He sent me a demand for the goblet, but as he did n't explain what he wished it for, of course I considered the message impertinent and refused it. It is n't the gems I care for; but I do insist upon being approached in a proper spirit. I am fond of romance myself, and if you and the Princess care to visit me some time, I'll show you my jewels. I have barrels of them. I am tired of them — so tired of them that I prefer paste for personal use."

I looked uneasily at the goblet in my hand.

"Oh, that is all genuine," he said. "You are quite welcome to it. But," he added, after a pause, "when you come to the throne, there's a little province that abuts on my dominions, and if you could see the way to transfer it to me — why, favors between friends, you know —"

I begged him to receive the assurances of my wish to oblige him in any reasonable request, and we parted in the best of humor.

"By the way," said he, as he pressed my hand in parting, "that gatekeeper who called you 'boy' —"

"Oh, let it go," I said.

"He has already been beheaded, or something," said the Khan. "I'm sorry, if you would have preferred to forgive him."

"It is of no consequence," I said.

"None whatever," said the Khan good-humoredly. "Good-by."

I returned to the frontier in the Khan's private carriage, and had a pleasant trip back to the palace. Like many other distinguished people, the Khan had been misunderstood.

My meeting with Vanella was joyful, and she received the goblet with exclamations of admiration and gratitude.

The King invited me to stay to supper, informally; and we had the most delicious muffins I ever ate. The Princess has never been able to make them taste quite so good again. She says that they were then flavored with our first happiness; but I insist that it was simply a larger portion of sugar.

Next morning, bright and early, I announced to the King that I was ready for the second test.

"It is a sweet little puzzle," said the King. "My daughter has another name than Vanella, known only to herself and to me. We have vowed never to tell the name to any human being. You must find out by to-morrow morning what that name is."

I was much discouraged, and did not see how it was possible for me to perform this task. I returned to my own room in the palace and racked my brains in vain all day. There seemed no possible clue to the mystery, and the longer I thought of the difficulty of the task, the bluer I became. Just at nightfall there came a light footstep at my door and then a soft knock.

"Come in," I said in a hollow voice.

It was one of the Princess's attendants.

"The Princess Vanella's compliments," said the maiden, "and she says this parrot chatters so that she cannot sleep at night. She requests you to take charge of him yourself." She bowed and retired.

"She cares no longer for me or my presents!" said I, bitterly.

Then I put upon a table the golden cage in which the parrot was confined, and threw myself upon the divan without undressing.

"Alas!" I said bitterly, "I have deceived the Khan! I shall never be able to learn the name—and I can never give him the province he desires. Unhappy ben Ephraf!"

"Mrs. ben Ephraf!" said the parrot.

"Hush!" I said ill-naturedly.

"Vanella, Vanella; Strawberry, Strawberry!" repeated the parrot slowly and impressively.

It did not require a remarkably keen intellect to comprehend the Princess's kindly hint. I went cheerfully to sleep, slept soundly till morning, and awoke ready to resume the tests.

But when I had guessed the name "Strawberry," much to the King's surprise, Vanella objected to putting me through any further trials, and as there was no reason for delay we were married within a few weeks.

We invited the Khan to the wedding, and he proved an excellent dancer and a most agreeable conversationalist.

Vanella was delighted with him, and he sent her fourteen mule-loads of jewels as a wedding present. My father also came to the wedding and gave me his hearty congratulations.

"You have won a prize, my son," he said.

And so it proved.

NOTE.—Any one who will give a green parrot a good home and kind treatment may have one free by applying to Mrs. ben Ephraf at the palace, any week-day between eleven and three o'clock.

THE PROFESSOR AND THE PATAGONIAN GIANT

EARLY one morning during my third visit to Patagonia, as I was strolling upon the banks of the River Chico, keeping a sharp lookout for a choice specimen of the *Rutabaga Tremendosa*, I saw what, at the time, I supposed to be a large and isolated cliff. It looked blue, and consequently I supposed it to be at some distance. Resuming my search for the beautiful saffron blossom which I have already named, my attention was for some moments abstracted. After pulling the plant up by the roots, however, I happened to cast my eyes again toward the supposed cliff, and you can conceive my extreme mortification and regret when I saw that it was not a cliff at all, but a giant, and, so far as I could see, one of the most virulent species.

He was advancing at a run, and, although not exerting himself overmuch, seemed to be going at a rate of some five kilometers a minute. Much annoyed at the interruption to my researches, I paused only long enough to deposit the *Rutabaga* securely in my botany box and then broke into an accelerated trot. Do me the justice to acquit me of any intention of entering into a contest of speed with the pursuing monster. I am not so conceited as to imagine I can cover five or even three kilometers a minute. No; I relied, rather, on the well-established scientific probability that the giant was stupid. I expected, therefore, that my head would have an opportunity to save my heels.

It was not long before I saw the need of taking immediate steps to save my specimens from destruction and myself from being eaten. He was certainly gaining upon me. As he foolishly ran with his mouth open, I noticed that his canine teeth were very well developed



"I SAW THE NEED OF TAKING IMMEDIATE STEPS TO SAVE MY SPECIMENS."

—not a proof, but strong evidence that he was a cannibal. I redoubled my speed, keeping an eager eye upon the topography in the hope that I might find some cave or crevice into which I could creep and thus obtain time enough to elaborate a plan of escape. I had not run more than six or eight kilometers, I think (for distances are deceitful in that part of Patagonia—or were, when I was there), when I saw a most convenient cretaceous cave.

To ensconce myself within its mineral recesses was the work of but a moment, and it was fortunate for me that it took no longer. Indeed, as I rolled myself deftly beneath a shelving rock, the giant was so near that he pulled off one of my boots.

He sat down at the entrance and breathed with astonishing force and rapidity.

"Now, if he is as stupid as one of his race normally should be," I said to myself, "he will stay there for several hours, and I shall lose a great part of this beautiful day." The thought made me restless, and I looked about to see whether my surroundings would hint a solution of the situation.

I was rewarded by discovering an outlet far above me. I could see through a cleft in the rocks portions of a cirro-cumulus cloud. Fixing my hat more firmly upon my head, I began the ascent. It did not take long. Indeed, my progress was, if anything, rather accelerated by the efforts of the attentive giant, who had secured a long and flexible switch,—a young India-rubber tree, I think, though I did not notice its foliage closely,—and was poking it with considerable violence into the cave. In fact, he lifted me some decameters at every thrust.

It may easily be understood, therefore, that I was not long upon the way. When I emerged, I was much pleased with the situation. Speaking as a military expert, it was perfect. Standing upon a commodious ledge, which seemed to have been made for the purpose, my head and shoulders projected from an opening in the cliff, which was just conveniently out of the giant's reach. As my head rose over the edge of the opening, the giant spoke :

"Aha, you 're there, are you?"

"I won't deny it," I answered.

"You think you 're safe, don't you?" he went on tauntingly.

"I know I am safe," I answered, with an easy confidence which was calculated to please.

"Well," he replied, "to-night I hope to eat you for supper!"

"What, then," I asked, with some curiosity, "are you going to do for dinner?"

"Oh, if that troubles you," said he, "all you have to do is to come out at dinner-time and I will eat you then."

Evidently the giant was not a witling. His answers were apt. After a moment's reflection I concluded it was worth the effort to make an appeal to his better nature — his over-soul.

"Don't you know that it is wrong to eat your fellow-beings?" I asked, with a happy mingling of austere reproach and sympathetic pain.

"Do you mean to come out soon?" asked the giant, seating himself upon an adjacent cliff, after tearing off such of the taller and stiffer trees as were in his way.

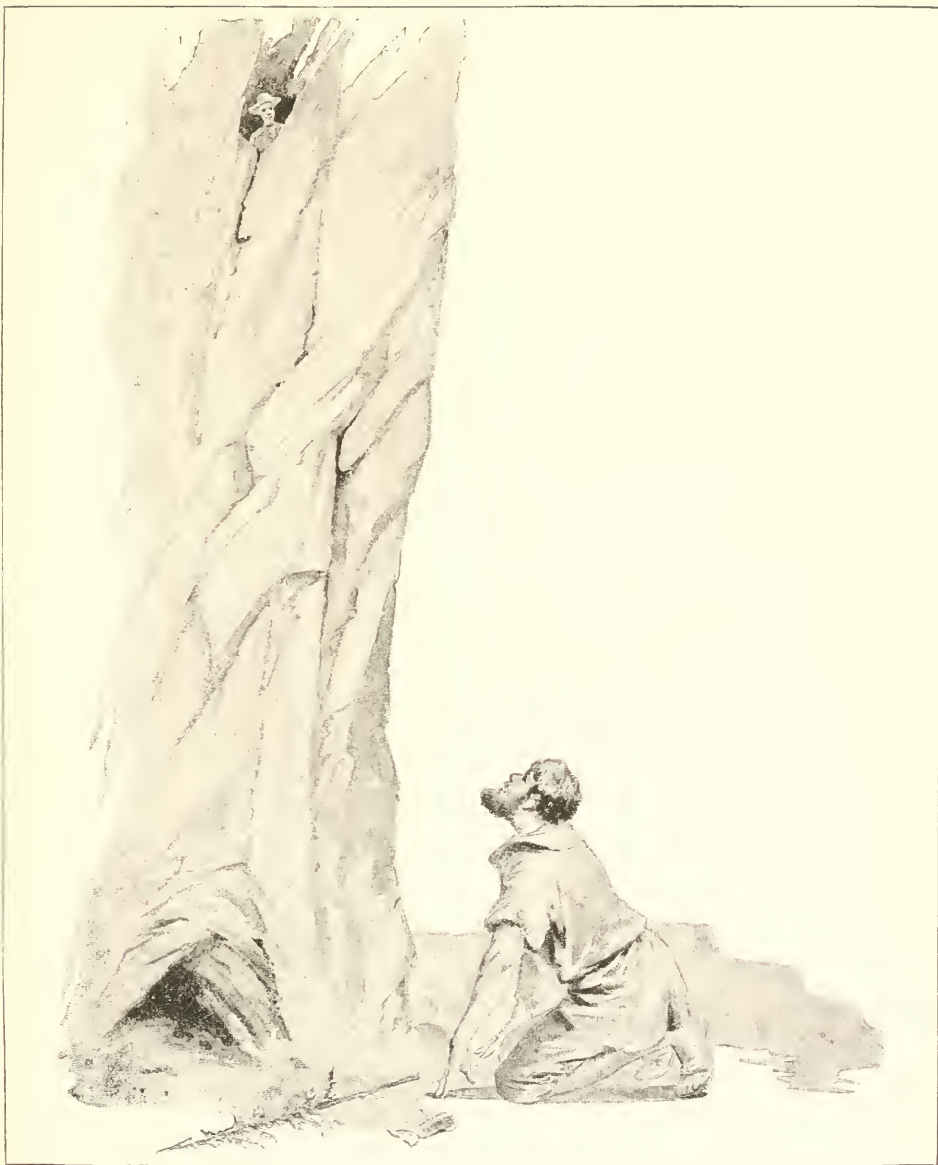
"It depends somewhat upon whether you remain where you are," I answered.

"Oh, I shall stay," said the giant, pleasantly. "Game is rare, and I have n't eaten a white man for two weeks."

This remark brought me back to my appeal to his higher being. "Then I shall remain here, too, for the present," I answered, "though I should like to get away before sunset. It's likely to be humid here after the sun sets. But, to return to my question, have you never thought that it was immoral and selfish to eat your fellow-creatures?"

"Why, certainly," said the giant, with a hearty frankness that was truly refreshing. "That is why," he went on, "I asked you whether you were coming out soon. If not, I would be glad to while the time away by explaining to you exactly how I feel about these matters. Of course I could smoke you out" (here he showed me an enormous boulder of flint and a long steel rod, the latter evidently a bit of machinery from some wrecked ocean-steamer), "but I make it a rule seldom to eat a fellow-mortal until he is fully convinced that, all things considered, I am justified in so doing."

The reference to the smoking-out process had convinced me that this was no hulking ignoramus of a giant, and for a moment I began to fear that my *Rutabaga Tremendosa* was lost to the world forever. But the latter part of his speech reassured me.



“‘AHA, YOU ’RE THERE, ARE YOU?’”

"If you can convince me that I ought to be eaten," I said, willing to be reasonable, "I shall certainly offer no objection. But I confess I have little fear that you will succeed."

"I first discovered that I was a giant," he said, absently chewing the stem of the India-rubber tree, "at a very early age. I could not get enough to eat. I then lived in New York City, for I am an American, like yourself."

We bowed with mutual pleasure.

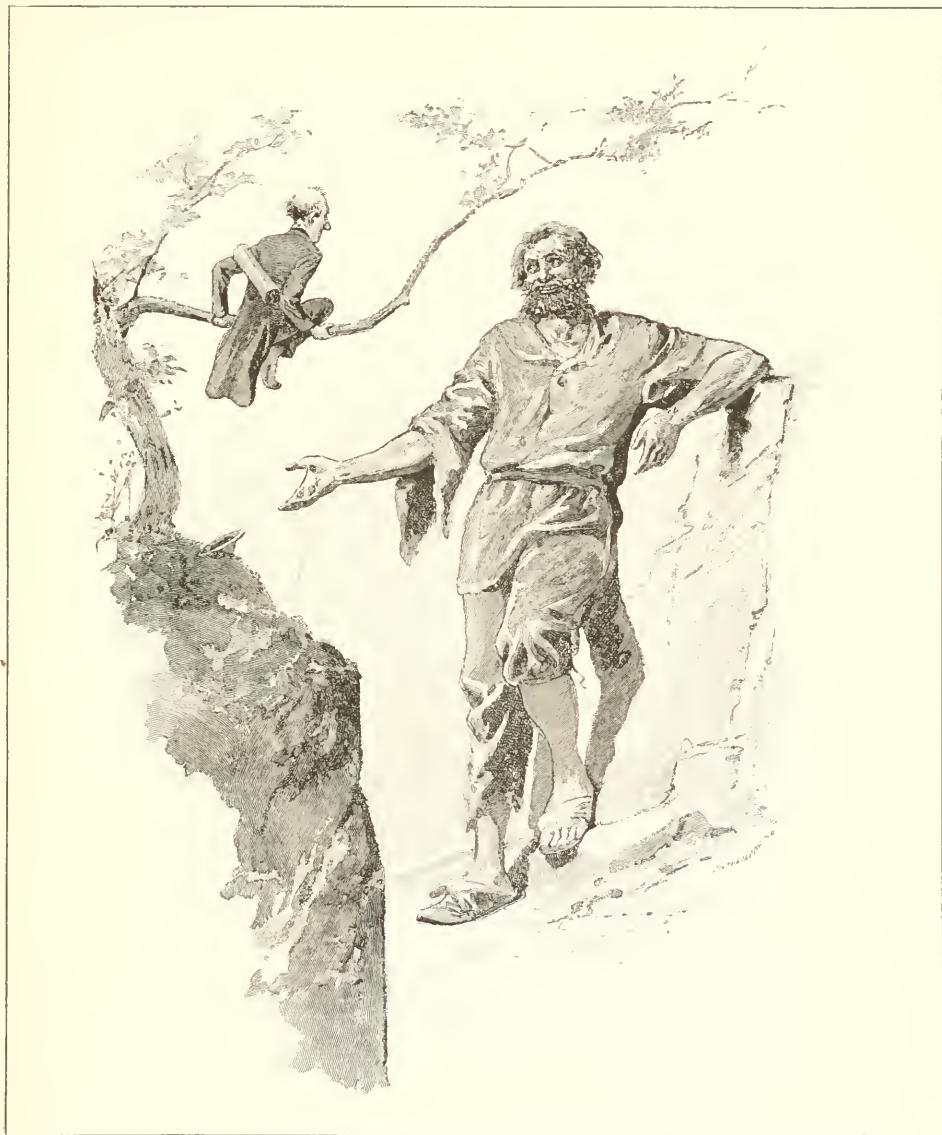
"I tried various sorts of work, but found I could not earn enough at any of them to pay my board-bills. I even exhibited myself in a museum, but found there the same trouble.

"I consulted my grandfather, who was a man of matured judgment and excellent sense. His advice was to leave the city and try for work in the country. I did so, and after some little trouble found employment upon a farm. I stayed there three days. Then I was told that it cost more to keep me than I was worth; which was true. So I left. Then I went to work on a railroad. There I did as much as twenty men. The result was a strike, and I was discharged."

"Is there much more autobiography?" I asked as politely as I could, for I was not at all interested in this unscientific memoir.

"Very little," he answered. "I can sum it up in a few words. Wherever I tried to get work, I was discharged, because my board was too expensive. If I tried to do more work to make up for it, the other men were dissatisfied, because it took the bread out of their mouths. Now, I put it to you, what was I to do?"

"Evidently, you were forced out of civilization," I answered, "and compelled to rely upon nature for your sustenance. That is," I went on, to forestall another question, "you had to become a hunter, trapper, or fisherman,—for of course, in your case, agriculture was out of the question, as you could n't easily get down to the ground, and would crush with your feet more crops than you could raise with your hands."



THE GIANT AND THE PROFESSOR SETTLE IT AMICABLY.

His eyes sparkled with joy at being so thoroughly understood. "Exactly," he said. "But the same trouble followed me there. Wherever I settled, the inhabitants complained that what I ate would support hundreds of other people."

"Very true," I answered; "but, excuse me, could you hand me a small rock to sit upon?—it is tiresome to stand here."

"Come out," he said. "You have my word of honor, as a compatriot of George ——"

"Say no more!" I broke in hastily.

I came out, and was soon, by his kind aid, perched upon the branch of a tree conveniently near.

"This argument," he said, sighing, "met me at every turn; and after much cogitation I could see no solution of the difficulty. No matter how far from the 'busy haunts of men' I proceeded, it was only to find that food grew scarcer as men were less numerous. At last I reached Patagonia, and after a few years I have eaten it almost bare. Now, to what conclusion am I driven?"

I thought it over. At last I said:

"I see the extremities to which you are reduced. But upon what principle do you proceed to the next step—cannibalism?"

"The greatest good to the greatest number," said he. "Whenever I eat an animal, I diminish the stock of food which supports mankind, but whenever I eat a man, I diminish the number to be supported. As all the wise men agree that it is the subsistence which is short, my course of action tends ultimately to the greater happiness of the race."

This seemed very reasonable and for a moment I was staggered. Then a happy thought came to me, and I suggested that if he should allow himself to die of starvation the demand for subsistence would be still more reduced.

He shook his head sadly. "I used to hope so myself. But

the experience of some years, tabulated and reduced to most accurate statistics, has convinced me beyond a doubt that I can catch and eat enough men, in a year, to more than make up for what would be saved if I should allow my own organism to cease its active exertions in the cause of humanity."

I thought very carefully over these arguments and was unable to pick a flaw in them.

"As a man of science," I said, after a pause, "I could wish that this interview might be reported to the world."

"Give yourself no uneasiness. It shall be done," said the giant.

"And I should also be glad to have the *Rutabaga Tremendosa* forwarded very soon to the Museum," I said thoughtfully.

"With pleasure," said the giant.

There was no excuse for further delay.

"And are you convinced?" asked the giant, speaking with much kindly consideration.

"Perfectly," I said, and kicked off the other boot.

[Note, by the giant.—In accordance with Professor Muddlehed's last wishes, I have reported our full conversation verbatim. In fact, much of the foregoing account was revised by the Professor himself, before supper. He would have been glad, I have no doubt, to have gone over the paper again, but the bell rang and he was too considerate to keep the table waiting. He had many excellent tastes, and there was a flavor of originality about the man—a flavor I like. I enjoyed meeting him very much, and regret that my principles were such as to preclude a longer and less intimate acquaintance. I forwarded the specimen to the museum as directed, and received in return an invitation to visit the building in New York. Though I cannot accept the kind invitation, I should find it gratifying to have the trustees at my own table.]



The Prince's Councilors

AS the Prince and
game of tennis,
"Extra — ex-
Ter'ble los' life!"

"Boy!" called the

"Extra?" asked the

"Yes, please," answered
taking the paper and draw-

"I can't change that,"

"Never mind the change," said the Prince. The boy's eyes sparkled. He hastily handed over two papers, and ran off with the coin, shouting as before, while heads popped from windows and people tried to find out the news without paying for it.

Meanwhile the Prince and the Page read their papers.

a Page were coming from a
a newsboy ran along crying:
tra-a! Here y' are; extra-a!

Prince, in a truly royal voice.
boy, running up to them.

the Prince condescendingly,
ing a gold coin from his purse.

said the boy.

EXTRA.

THE PRINCESS PARAGON!

POSSIBLY PERISHING!!

ALONE AND ADRIFT!!

ROYALTY TO THE RESCUE!!!

By this time both had dropped the rackets and were reading rapidly down the big print so as to get at the facts. The finer print told the story in simple words.

The position of the Princess Paragon — at present entirely unknown — is for that very reason most alarming. With her Royal Father she this morning went sailing in their private yacht. In spite of His Majesty's well-known skill with tiller and tackle, he lost control for an instant of the stanch little vessel, and, fearing the worst, courageously jumped overboard and waded ashore, intending to bring assistance to Her Royal Highness, the unfortunate Princess. Having lost one of his shoes in the wet sand, His Majesty was so delayed by his efforts to find it that the yacht had drifted beyond reach of those on shore before the fishermen sent by the intrepid King could reach the beach.

Distracted by his loss, the King now most generously offers his daughter's hand and a princely dowry, also half his Kingdom (subject to a first and second mortgage), to the noble youth who shall restore to him his daughter and the valuable necklace of diamonds she wears.

We commend the quest to the young Prince and the brave youths of his court. Further particulars in the regular edition this afternoon. The boat, we learn, was fully insured.

"There!" said the Page, throwing aside the paper. "That 's just what I 'm looking for!"

"What is that?" asked the Prince, as he folded his paper and put it in his pocket.

"An opportunity to distinguish myself — to become renowned!" said the Page, proudly.

"You shall have it," answered the Prince, graciously. "You have always served me well, and you play tennis nearly as well as I do." (The score that afternoon was six sets love in favor of the Page.)

"Then you are willing I should try this adventure?" asked the Page, in surprise.

"Certainly," replied the Prince. "I shall take you with me, of course."

"Oh!" said the Page, in quite a different tone. 'He had been

surprised at the Prince's generosity, but now he understood it better. Then he turned to the Prince and said, "When shall you start?"

"In a few days, I think," said the Prince, as he stooped to pick up his racket. "It depends on how long it will take to decide upon the best plan, to get things ready, and to pack up my robes, and put my fleet in order."

"Indeed!" said the Page. Then he added, "As I'm quite willing to go alone, because I'm in a hurry, I think I won't wait. In fact, I'll start now."

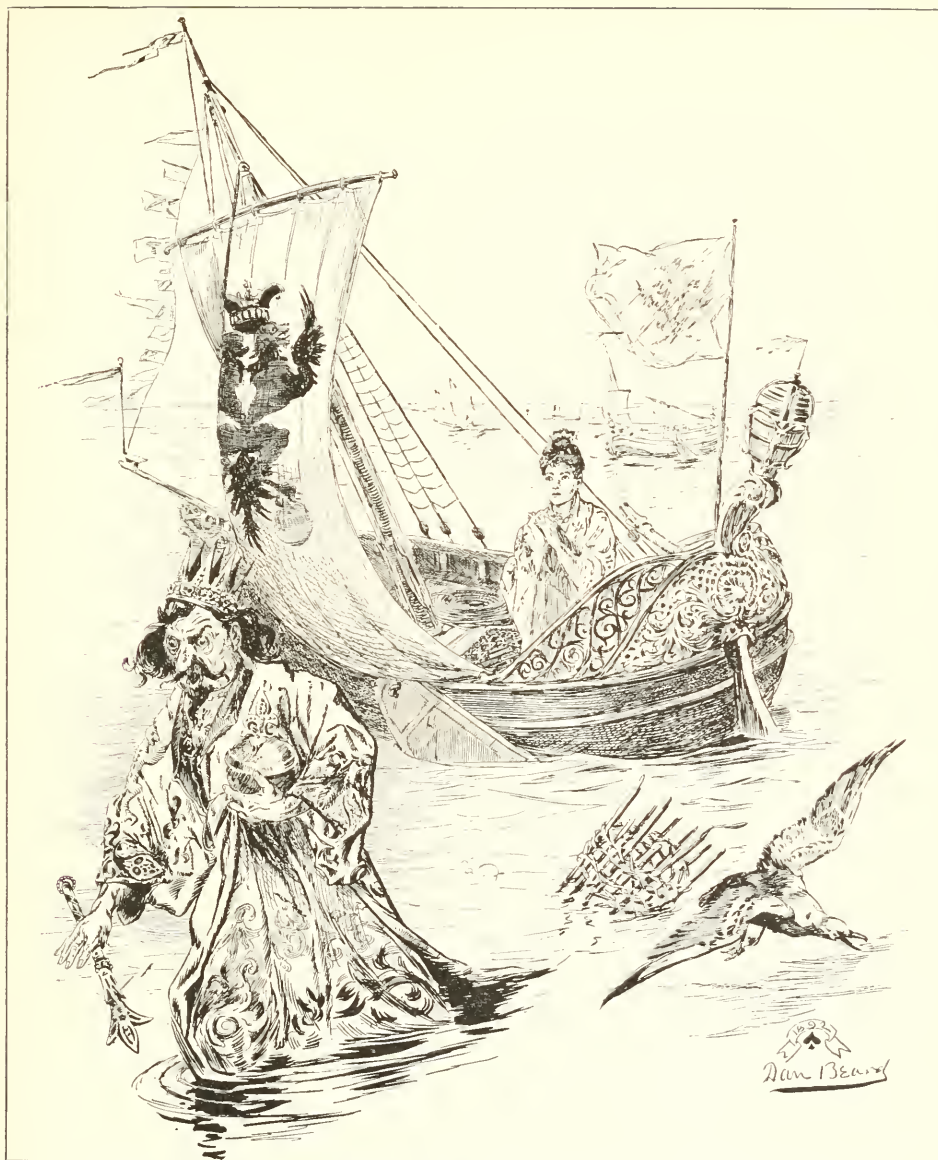
Then, coolly turning on his heel, he walked off down the street, leaving his racket where it had fallen, and the Prince where he stood.

"His last week's wages are n't paid, either," said the Prince to himself; "and I don't believe he'll ever come back for that racket of his. Reckless boy!"

The Prince picked up the racket and went leisurely home to the palace, where he was received by two long lines of footmen, who bowed low as he entered.

There were quail on toast for supper, and the Prince was so fond of these little birds that he ate seven of them, and was so busied over it that he could not find time to say a word until he was quite done. The Queen was telling the King all about a new gown; and the King was thinking how he could persuade the treasurer that there was a little too much money instead of much too little; and the Jester was wondering what chance he might have to make a living as a farmer; and the nobles were trying to attract the King's attention; so there was hardly a word spoken at the table until the Prince was quite through with his seven small birds. Then said the Prince:

"Oh, by the way, Papa, I almost forgot to ask you something. Will you please tell the treasurer to give me three or four bags of gold to-morrow? I'm going to take a little journey."



"HIS MAJESTY COURAGEOUSLY JUMPED OVERBOARD AND WADED ASHORE."

But the King at first paid no attention.

"What did you say?" he asked, at length.

"You tell him," suggested the Prince to the Jester.

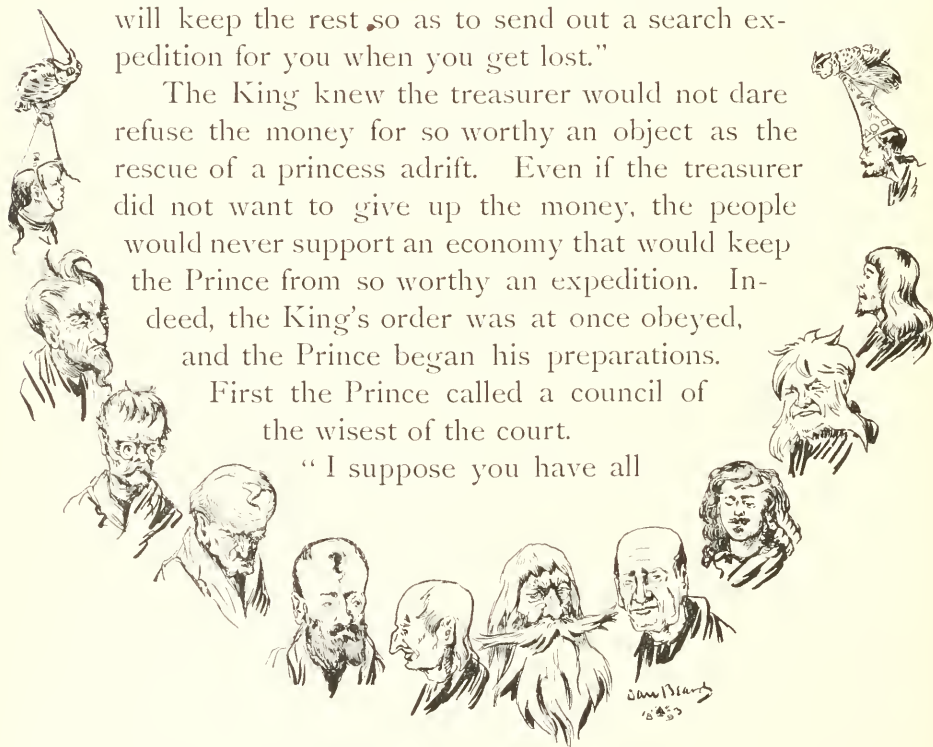
So the Jester gave the King a hasty outline of the news in the paper, and told him that the Prince thought of going in search of the Princess. The King took little interest in the story until there was mention of the three or four bags of gold. Then he awoke to animation.

"To be sure," he cried. "It is an excellent plan. I will give you an order on the treasurer for six bags of gold, and I will keep the rest so as to send out a search expedition for you when you get lost."

The King knew the treasurer would not dare refuse the money for so worthy an object as the rescue of a princess adrift. Even if the treasurer did not want to give up the money, the people would never support an economy that would keep the Prince from so worthy an expedition. Indeed, the King's order was at once obeyed, and the Prince began his preparations.

First the Prince called a council of the wisest of the court.

"I suppose you have all



SOME OF THE COUNCILORS.

read the news about the Princess?" he asked, when his councilors had assembled.

"Yes," they answered.

"I am desirous of not making a blunder at the outset, and so have resolved to secure the assistance of the wisest men of the kingdom. What, then, would you advise?"

"It seems to me," said the Chief Secretary, who was so venerable that his hair and beard seemed turned to cotton-batting, "that we ought first to ascertain whether the report is confirmed."

A low murmur of assent arose from them all; and the Prince, accepting the suggestion, said: "Let us then appoint a committee of investigation. Who knows how to go about the appointing of a committee?"

After a brief pause for consideration, another old courtier arose and said that he had a neighbor who was skilled in such matters, and if they would take an adjournment for a day or two he would ascertain just how to go about it.

The Prince thought the request was very reasonable, and announced that the council would meet again in two days. So they separated, and the Prince betook himself to the tennis-courts again, this time, however, with another page. The Prince found during the games that the former page's racket was a very good one; and this reminded him that the owner of it had started to seek the lost Princess.

Suddenly stopping the game, he said to one of his attendants:

"On second thought, I think I ought not to have sent after the man who knows how to appoint a committee. Suppose you go after the man who went after him, and tell him to come back."

Away went the attendant, and the Prince returned to the palace, resolved to prosecute the search with vigor. The council was again called together, and the Prince told them that without waiting to

verify the report of the loss of the Princess, he meant to seek her at once.

“But in which direction will you go?” asked the Court Geographer.

“Oh, in any direction!” said the Prince, indifferently. “There is no telling where a boat may drift to.”

“In that case,” said the Court Mathematician, smiling, “the chances are about one in three hundred and sixty that you will hit upon the right way. Let me show you.”

So the Court Mathematician sent a page to the kitchen for some beans. Away ran the boy; only to return in a few moments with the report that the cook wished to know whether he wanted “a pint, or a quart, or how many?”

“I want three hundred and sixty white ones, and one black one,” said the Mathematician.

This time the page was gone a long while. When he returned, he explained that it took the cook longer to count the beans than one would think. That they had disagreed, and had counted them twice, to make sure; and then had to send to the grocer’s for a black bean, since there was none in the palace.

“There was no need of that,” said the Mathematician, impatiently. “I can mark one of the white ones, and it will do quite as well.”

So the page ran to overtake the messenger who had started for the grocer’s and meanwhile the Mathematician made an ink mark on one of the white beans, put them all into a hat, and shook them well. “Now draw one,” he said, offering the hat to the Prince.

The Prince drew one. It was the marked bean.

“Well,” he said, “what does that prove?”

“It really does n’t prove anything,” said the Mathematician, a little out of temper. “Try again.” So the Prince returned the marked white bean to the hat, and after they were well shaken, drew again. This time he drew a plain bean.

"You see," said the Mathematician, triumphantly.

"What do I see?" asked the Prince.

"You did n't get the right one."

"But I did the first time," argued the Prince. "All your experiment proves is that I may hit it right the first time, and miss it the second, if I should try again. But if I hit it right the first time, I sha'n't have to try over again; so your rule does n't apply. Is n't that so?"

"It does sound reasonable," answered the Mathematician, who was honest though scientific.

"Perhaps you'd like to go home and try the experiment for yourself?" said the Prince, kindly.

The Mathematician borrowed the beans, and went home, promising to send a written report of his trials after a few days.

"Now that we have settled the mathematical side of the question," said the Court Meteorologist, "we can go at the problem scientifically. Here, if you will allow me, is the way it appears to me, your Royal Highness."

Then the Meteorologist unrolled a map and pinned it on the wall.

"The present position of the lost Princess," said he, "depends upon the joint action of the winds and tides. The Gulf Stream has little or nothing to do with the problem, as the boat was abandoned beyond the sphere of its influence. The trade-winds for a similar reason may perhaps be disregarded. There is no question here of simoom or sirocco, and —"

"Maybe it would be as well to leave out the things that have nothing to do with it," suggested the Prince, a little impatiently.

"But how shall we know what to leave out unless we go over them to see?" asked the lecturer.

"True," said the Prince; "but as that will take some time, you

might run over the list at home and report to me, say, the day after to-morrow."

"I will do so," replied the Meteorologist, rolling up his map and departing with an air of great importance.

"I don't see," remarked the Prince, uneasily, "that we are making real progress."

"There has been nothing but nonsense, so far," said a bluff old Admiral. "What *I* say is to take a boat and go after the young lady in shipshape style!"

The Prince was so much encouraged by this direct way of putting the matter that he let the undignified mention of the Princess pass without reproof.

"And what would you advise?" he asked the Admiral.

"Take the fastest brigantine you can find —" began the officer; but he was interrupted.

"In a case of less importance," broke in the voice of a portly Commodore, "I should not venture to interrupt my superior officer. But here the matter admits of no false hesitation because of etiquette."

"What suggestion have you to make?" inquired the Prince.

"A brigantine," the Commodore said impressively, "is an unreliable craft at best. I say, take a frigate, at once."

"Pshaw!" broke in the Admiral explosively.

"Gentlemen," said the perplexed Prince, "I cannot presume to decide between you. I am a novice in these matters. Suppose you discuss the question fully, and report in writing?"

When the naval officers had departed, there were left only a few small fry who asked that they might have a day or two to think the whole matter over before committing themselves to a decided opinion. Upon their withdrawal, the Prince found only the Jester.

"Perhaps," said the Prince, a little sarcastically, "you have some advice to give?"

"Perhaps," replied the Jester; "but first I have a plan to suggest."

"What is that?"

"You might take a small army and go after the page who started out to seek the Princess. By the time you have come up with him, he will perhaps have found her. Then you can sail in and take her away from him, and bring her home yourself. That 's the way kings and princes often do."

"But that seems hardly fair," said the Prince, after a few moments' reflection.

"Of course it is n't fair," said the Jester; "but it 's your only chance. I have no doubt he has found the Princess long ago."

"Do you think so?" asked the Prince.

"No doubt of it," said the Jester. "You see, he did n't wait for any advice, but started off at once."

"Is n't advice a good thing?"

"Yes," said the Jester, "for lawyers and councilors. They make their living by it. Advice is good when it 's good; but the best qualities are hard to find, and the time it takes to find them is sometimes worth more than the advice when found."

"Then you would n't advise me to take advice?" said the Prince, thoughtfully.

"My advice is," said the Jester, "don't take mine, or anybody's."

"Is n't that rather a difficult course to follow?" asked the Prince, after a moment's reflection.

"Very," the Jester agreed.

"I think," the Prince went on, "that I shall start now, and take my chances."

"I 'll go with you," replied his companion.

So they started toward the palace gate; but just as they reached it and had called for the gate-keeper, there came a summons from

without. When the gate was opened there was the Page. He seemed weary, and his shoes showed that he had traveled a long way on foot.

"Did you find the Princess?" asked the Prince, eagerly.

"Yes," said the Page, very calmly. "I found her."

"Fortunate boy!" said the Prince, a little enviously.

"I don't know about that," said the Page. "She was as cross as two sticks about having been left to go adrift. It rained, you know; and when I rowed out to the yacht, I found that everything on board was soaking wet, and she had n't had anything to eat for two days, and—my goodness!—she was hopping mad!"

"What did she say?" asked the Jester.

"She said she 'd like to box my ears," said the Page, earnestly. "Then I told her if she was n't more polite I would n't rescue her. That quieted her, quick! So then she did n't say anything, but she looked about as pleasant as cold gravy. As soon as I towed the boat ashore, she gave me some money and told me to get along home. So I did, and I was glad to be away. I did n't tell her who I was, and I don't think she will ever find me. You won't tell, will you?" pleaded the Page, as he finished.

"No", said the Prince, laughing. "I won't tell. But perhaps you did n't treat the Princess with proper courtesy. No wonder she was out of humor, after being adrift so long."

"I 'll tell you," said the Page, suddenly, "what we 'll do. I found the Princess, and I suppose I 'm entitled to the reward. Now, can't you arrange it that you 'll marry the Princess? I think she 'll just suit you. She is a fine-looking Princess, and I don't believe she meant to be cross. Do you think you can arrange it? It would be a splendid thing for the kingdom, you know. It would unite the two kingdoms, and there 'd be all sorts of advantages. You can say that I went with your permission, you know, and that

I 'm engaged to be married, and would n't presume to aspire to a princess's hand."

"It 's a good suggestion," said the Jester; "for otherwise there 'll be war, of course. The other king will be bound to know why this young man won't accept his daughter's hand, and then there 'll be a lot of diplomatic correspondence, ultimatums, protocols, and all sorts of goings-on. If you don't mind, I think you would do well to marry this Princess."

"I don't mind at all," answered the Prince; "and I think I 'll write a letter to her this very day. But how," he went on, turning to the Page, "did you come to be engaged? I did n't know anything about it?"

"The fact is," said the Page, "I 'm not quite engaged; but there 's one of the maids of honor who will have me, I 'm sure. She told me the other day that she wished it was leap-year every day; and I think that 's a distinct encouragement, don't you?"

His friend agreed that it was a marked observation.

"You 'll be safe for a day or two," remarked the Jester to the Page; "and meanwhile you can be getting your clothes brushed and your shoes mended. The Prince will write to-day."

Early on the following morning, as the Prince came down to breakfast, he was told that a deputation was awaiting him in the Council-Room. "Who are they?" he asked.

"The Councilors with their reports," answered the messenger.

"But," said the Prince, "they are too —"

"Hush!" said the Jester; "let us not lose their words of wisdom."

"Very well," the Prince agreed, smiling.

So the Prince, the Jester, and the Page entered the room where the Council were assembled. All bowed profoundly.

"Your Royal Highness," began the Secretary, "in order to verify the report of the loss of the Princess, I sent an inquiry to a friend of

mine who stands very high in favor at her father's court. It was thus worded: 'Is the Royal Princess absent from the Court?' And I have his sealed reply: 'She is not.' That I consider conclusive. Is it not?"

"Yes," said the Jester; "it is not."

"I have no doubt," said the Prince, "that your information is correct; and I thank you for your diligence."

The Secretary bowed and was seated.

"I," began the Meteorologist, "have prepared a list of the things that may be disregarded in the search. It contains 872 items, with two appendices and voluminous notes. I will read it."

"Never mind," said the Prince, very graciously. "I will order it filed in the Royal Archives. We will now listen to the Mathematician."

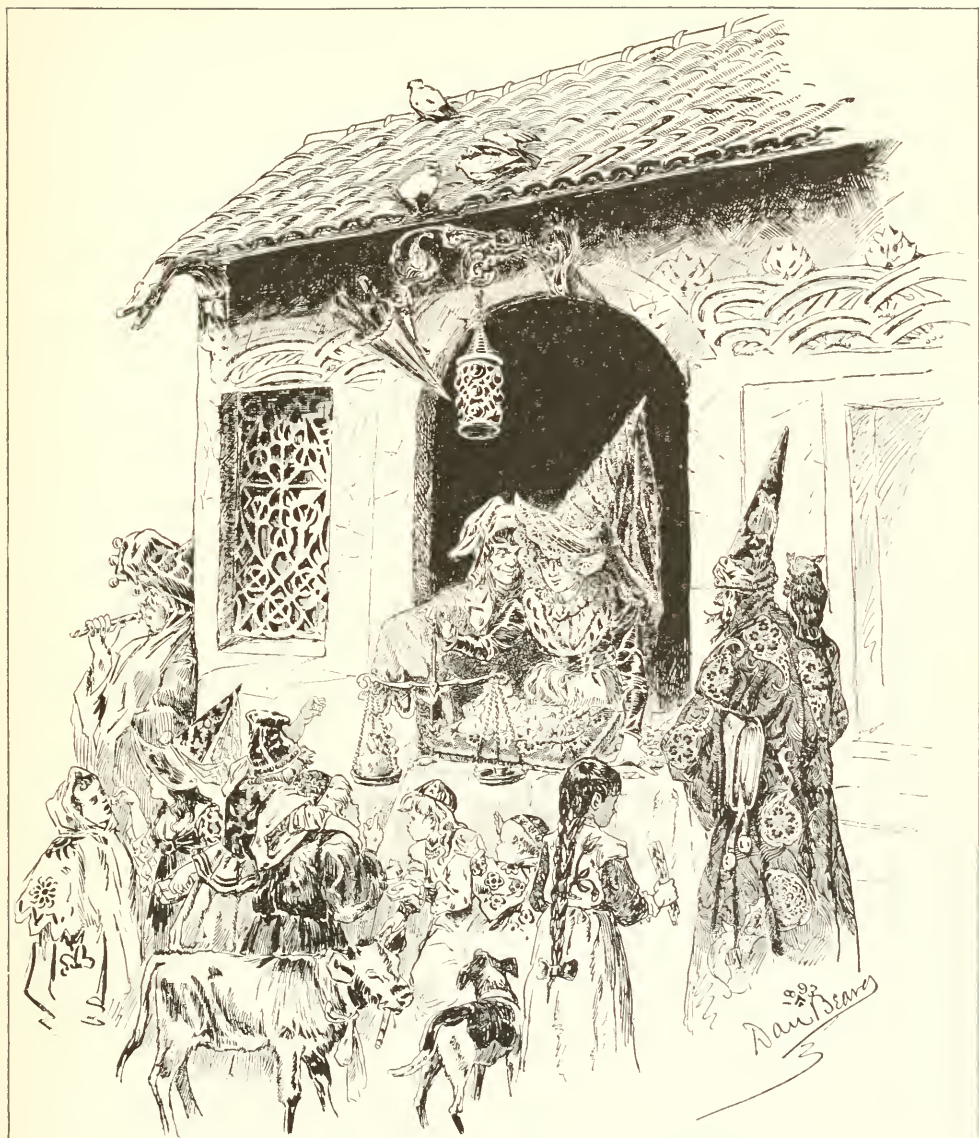
"I have tried the bean-experiment several hundreds of times," said the Mathematician, "and have not yet succeeded in drawing the marked bean. The formula of chances I have worked out. I find that 'If Henry puts 360 white beans into a hat, and John draws a good many times, no one can tell whether he will draw the marked bean the first time, or not at all.' I consider that an exact statement of the matter."

"I am not prepared to dispute you," said the Prince, "and I will ask leave therefore to express my indebtedness to you."

"We," said the Admiral, speaking for himself and the Commodore, "I regret to say, have as yet arrived at nothing more advanced than a compromise. We have agreed to recommend a squadron composed of equal numbers of brigantines and frigates. Thus you will secure the advantages of both forms of craft."

"A wise conclusion," said the Prince; "and I gladly offer to you both my fervent gratitude."

A few of the smaller fry of Councilors yet remained to be heard,



THE PAGE AND THE MAID OF HONOR KEEP A CANDY-STORE.

but the Prince announced that he had bestowed upon each councilor The Order of the Brazen Owl. As he was about to leave the room, the Councilors, after a moment's consultation, begged permission to ask a question. It was granted.

"We should like to know what use Your Highness wished to make of the information we have furnished?"

"To find the Princess who was lost," answered the Prince.

"Oh, yes," said the Councilors' spokesman. "We had forgotten what it was all about. But it 's of no consequence now."

"No," said the Prince; "she is rescued."

"Indeed?" said the Councilors, with polite interest. Then they put on their cloaks and went their several ways, all reading their reports to one another, and none listening.

The Prince and Princess were married soon after, and the Page and the Maid of Honor were best man and bridesmaid.

The Prince pensioned the Councilors and sent them to America. They all sailed in one ship. The vessel is several days overdue, but undoubtedly will arrive in safety after the Admiral and the Commodore have settled a little difference of opinion as to where they had better land.

The Page and the Maid of Honor are married, and keep a candy-store where they sell a dollar's worth of candy for five cents. They sent me the address, but you 'll be sorry to learn that I have mislaid it.

TEDDY AND THE WOLF

THE Doctor had said, "Now, Mr. Rowland, I will be frank with you. Unless you get away from the city, and stay away, I will not answer for the consequences!"

Of course there could be no hesitation after that, and Mr. Rowland, Mrs. Rowland, and Teddy packed up their little keepsakes, sold everything else, and transferred themselves to Bartonville.

Here the breadwinner of the family bought a slender stock of goods and opened a small store.

"You will see how I shall prosper," he said to his wife. "My city experience will give me a great advantage over the other tradesmen. I shall be more businesslike, and if you and little Teddy will only thrive as well as I shall make my trade thrive, we will not regret the stifling city."

So far as Mrs. Rowland was concerned, there was nothing to complain about. After two months in the new home, she had grown rosy and bright—as rosy and pretty as Teddy himself; and he was by far the finest five-year-old in town—even his father admitted it.

But, alas! for the thriving trade. Mr. Rowland had put all his money into the hoes and rakes, axes and brooms, which stood looking so clean and trim before the door. They stood bravely to their posts, and equally faithful were the rolls of cloth and barrels and boxes on duty indoors. But hardly a strange foot crossed the threshold to mar the freshly sanded floor; only a few villagers from curiosity strayed aimlessly in and out again, to make their purchases

elsewhere. Many, in welcoming the new-comer, had reminded him that "competition was the life of trade," but he was beginning to think, sadly enough, that it was also the death of trade, in some cases at least. The rent, the butcher, the baker, and candlestick-maker, had taken the few dollars saved "to get a good start." Mrs. Rowland had darned and crisscrossed Teddy's red stockings into ridges and lumps; she had turned and "fixed" her few dresses until she felt that her worried little brain needed turning and darning, too. But their money was gone, and the thriving trade had not begun.

Mr. Rowland tried to be hopeful, but his set lips grew into a grim hardness; and he talked less and less of his prospects as the future became more uncertain.

Teddy found no fault. He admired his well-mended stockings, and pitied those who lacked the picturesque variety of contrasted patches. Soon after the sun was well above the hills, Teddy's bread and milk made its daily visit to his bowl, and Teddy never thought of asking awkward questions in the case of either mystery.

One morning the discouraged store-keeper went to the bank to draw out his last small balance.

"Going to close your account?" asked Mr. Prentice, the president, who always was particular to speak to his customers.

"For a time only, I hope!" replied Mr. Rowland bravely, counting the few small bits of paper, with thoughts far away from any consideration of arithmetic.

"You must not withdraw your patronage," said the smiling president, as he turned and walked back into his cozy office.

Mr. Rowland was unusually silent during the evening, and even forgot to tell Teddy his regular story before putting him to bed. The little boy noticed his father's depression, and kept very quiet. When his mother began to look meaningly at the clock, Teddy came and said good-night, and went to bed without a word of objection.

"Poor boy! He must be tired out," said Mrs. Rowland, when she returned to the room. Then she sat down to her stocking-basket.

But Teddy was not tired; he was thinking. He was wondering what troubled his father. Teddy did not mean to lie awake, much less to listen to the conversation between his father and mother. The door was ajar, and he could not help noticing that the usual reading-aloud was omitted; nor could he fail to hear a word or two, now and then. What he heard convinced him that he was right in thinking his father out of sorts and worried, and also made him sure that he knew what was the trouble. He heard his father saying:

"So you see, Anna, there 's no need for me to go to the store. I might just as well be here with you; at least I could be at work in the garden, and then there would be something done toward keeping the wolf from the door!"

Teddy heard no more, for he fell fast asleep. But when he awoke next morning his mind was made up, and soon after his plans were matured.

"Are you going to the store?" he asked his father with some surprise, when the good-by kiss was given.

"Yes, Teddy; somebody may come in, and I must be there," replied the father, as he trudged slowly down the gravel walk.

Teddy watched him anxiously, and then turned briskly toward the house. The first thing to do was to get his bow-gun. He did not remember where he had put it, but that did not disquiet him—he would ask his mother.

"Mama, where is my gun?" asked Teddy in perfect confidence.

"Where did you leave it?" asked his mother, a little absent-mindedly. Teddy leaned up against the kitchen-table with one small finger in his mouth and tried to think. But he had n't an idea. At length Mrs. Rowland said:

"You were playing African hunter yesterday, and borrowed your father's big boots. Go and find the boots, and perhaps you may find the gun, too."

Teddy climbed the attic stairs, two steps to each stair, found the gun stowed away in one of the boots, and was so impressed by his mother's suggestion that he almost resolved to consult so helpful a mother about the terrible wolf.

But Teddy was accustomed to rely upon himself, and had been so often told to try his own powers before seeking help, that he concluded to keep his own counsel. Now that he had the gun, he sought the next thing needed for his plan. This was something which had not occurred to him until just as he was parting his hair that morning, on the third trial, for Teddy liked "the little paf to the top of my head" very straight indeed.

"Mama, can I go and get something from Papa's workshop?" he asked, when he came back to the kitchen. "I won't hurt myself a bit; and I don't want to tell you what it is!"

"Yes, Teddy," said Mrs. Rowland, hardly noticing the strange request,—she was thinking of the wolf, too!

Away went the sturdy, small cross-bowman through the thick grass, taking the shortest cut. Presently he returned, carrying with him a steel-trap. After scouting a little, Teddy satisfied himself that the coast was clear, and dragged the trap around to the front door. He felt sure that this must be the door his father meant, for it was almost always closed and bolted. He placed the trap cleverly enough before the door, but by a trifling oversight forgot, or else did not know enough, to set it. Then Teddy retired to an ambush behind a thick evergreen, strung his cross-bow with a care which would not have been discreditable to Denys himself, and awaited all comers.

About half an hour afterward, Mr. Prentice, walking leisurely down to the bank, like a man who could afford to take his time,

caught sight of a curly, golden head in Mr. Rowland's front yard. He stopped, for he was fond of Teddy and often paused to say a word to him. Teddy thought Mr. Prentice the greatest man in the world—next to his own father. So, when the banker rubbed the little curls with his gold-headed stick and said, "Hello, Curly-head! Are you too proud to pass the time of day with a friend this morning?" Teddy rose from behind the tree, tip-toed close to the fence, and replied almost in a whisper, "Dood-morning, Mr. Prentice. Please teep twiet, and go away, please, as twick as you can!"

Somewhat surprised and alarmed, the banker asked, "Is your mother sick, Teddy?"

"No, sir. She 's well; but she 's afraid!"

"Afraid? Afraid of what? Where is your father? Anything wrong?" Mr. Prentice was seriously troubled. He had little children of his own, and wild visions of contagious diseases, accidents, and disasters were jumbled in his brain.

"Papa 's gone to the store. I dess he was afraid, too," said Teddy, sagaciously.

"What is it, Teddy?" said the banker sternly.

"It 's a wolf," replied Teddy in a mere whisper, looking uneasily around and wishing, for the first time, that Mr. Prentice would stop talking to him and not interfere with his plans.

"A wolf!" said Mr. Prentice, first looking blank and then laughing heartily. "Why, Teddy, you 're a goose! There are no wolves for hundreds of miles around. Somebody has been making fun of you."

"Yes, there are! There 's one wolf, anyway," said the boy, with a nod of wisdom.

"What makes you think so?" asked Mr. Prentice, for he was one of those who think it not unwise to find out what children mean before laughing at them.

Teddy was pleased by the respectful tone, and felt a wish to be polite in return. So, trusting that the enemy would be kind enough to defer the attack for a few moments, he told his grown-up friend how he had heard "Papa tell Mama that he did n't know how he was going to teep that wolf from coming in that door!"

"And," continued Teddy, "I got the wolf out of my Noah's Ark, so that I could tell him when he came, and I got the twap out for him, and my gun. Papa 's got to be down at the store, so 's if anybody *should* come there. And Mama can't fight, 'cause she 's a girl, and there 's nobody home but me—unless you 'll stay?" Teddy glanced at the kindly face above him, as if even his brave heart would not disclaim a companion in arms. "My gun *hurts*, too!" he went on, with pride (for the banker had not said a word in reply). "Want to see?" and he offered to demonstrate its effectiveness against his friend's leg.

Mr. Prentice looked toward the door of the house. There lay the trap half hidden under a spray of evergreen. Then he picked up the brave little huntsman and gave him a kiss, put him down softly, and walked away without a word. His hands were clasped behind him and he was thinking something about "—and thy neighbor as thyself."

Teddy went back to his post, but he was puzzled and his singleness of purpose was gone.

During the day, Mr. Prentice spoke to Mr. Dustan, one of the directors of the bank.

"Seen what a nice new store it is, that Mr. Rowland has? He 's a new-comer. You ought to give him a little of your custom now and then; he 's one of our depositors, you know, and one good turn deserves another! Really, Dustan, he 's got a nice family, and you 'd oblige me if you could favor him with an order now and then."

Mr. Dustan said he would—of course, he would. Time he changed, anyway; the other tradesmen were becoming careless, competition was a good thing! Then they talked of banking matters.

Mr. Prentice managed to say another word to another friend that same afternoon; and to yet another the next morning, and he did not forget to take care that his suggestions should bear fruit.

The result was very bad for the wolf. Teddy did n't see him. In fact, after dinner Teddy forgot all about the animal, for one of the older boys came along and took the hunter out fishing.

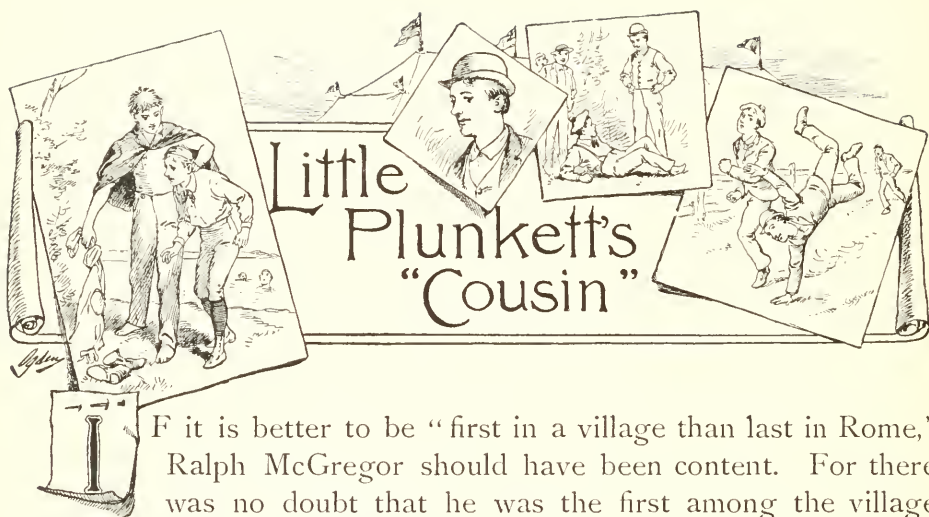
Mr. Rowland was at first much surprised at the sudden tide of custom and prosperity. Many came, and, finding "the new man" civil and obliging, accurate and punctual, they came again.

Some weeks later Mr. Rowland said to his wife, with an air of some profundity:

"Anna, my dear, patience is sure to tell in the long run! I came very near to giving up in despair; but, you see the darkest hour was just before the dawn. There is nothing like a bold front to scare the wolf from the door!"

Mrs. Rowland looked lovingly at her husband and thought him a very clever man.

But Teddy was sleeping the sleep of the just, and as for Mr. Prentice, he never told the story of their little wolf-hunt.



IF it is better to be "first in a village than last in Rome," Ralph McGregor should have been content. For there was no doubt that he was the first among the village boys in all those pursuits which they most valued. Not only was he thus preëminent, but he was blessed with competitors some of whom were able to threaten his possession of the title of champion.

Ralph, therefore, never failed to realize the sweetness of power — continual attempts to displace him having thus far only resulted in lengthening the list of his victories.

One Saturday afternoon the boys started for their swimming-beach, which was on a lake not far from the village where they lived. With and without permission, the little group had come, in twos and threes, along the hot and dusty road which led past the village store, between fields and meadows, over the rises and hollows, to the lake shore.

On the way down there had been a race ; and, after an exciting

struggle, Ralph had won it. He was in high spirits over the victory, and this made him a little boisterous.

When they entered the water, Ralph had "ducked" one of the smaller boys, who had made little resistance or remonstrance at the moment, but bided his time and retaliated, as Ralph discovered when he left the water and began to dress.

Ralph examined his shirt just long enough to discover that knots had been tied in the sleeves and then, hastily drawing on his trousers and throwing his jacket around his shoulders, he started to run along the road after the retreating figure of the sly small boy, who had left the water some little time before.

In spite of the long start secured, Ralph overtook his fleeing prey and grasped him firmly by the nape of the neck. Then, without checking his speed, Ralph turned a long curve, driving his unhappy captive before him, and the two were soon at the swimming-beach again.

"Now," said Ralph, "you can just untie those knots, youngster, and be quick, too!"

"What for?" asked the younger boy, whose name was Plunkett, feigning a bland innocence which was really absurd under the circumstances.

Disdaining other answer, Ralph tightened his grasp upon Plunkett's neck in a most convincing way. Plunkett seemed satisfied with this proof of his crime, and began a reluctant struggle with the knots, regretting perhaps that he had so firmly constructed them.

A few of the older boys had meanwhile come to the conclusion that there was something to be said on the other side of this case which Ralph was deciding so summarily.

"See here, Ralph," said Tom Cromwell, one of the most ambitious of the champion's rivals, "just suppose you let Plunkett go. He's all right. You ducked him first!"

"What 's that to you, anyway?" asked Ralph, never relaxing his grip upon the stooping Plunkett.

"Oh, nothing much," said Tom; "only you ought to be fair."

"So I am fair," Ralph replied. "I only ducked him for a joke."

"And I only tied your clothes for a joke," responded the smaller boy, with some spirit.

"Well, it 's a different thing," said Ralph, "and you know it." This last clause he added as a clincher, for he was conscious that the distinction between the two acts was far from clear to himself, and was unwilling to argue.

No further remonstrance was made by Cromwell, and little Plunkett soon finished the task imposed upon him, so the subject was dropped, and the boys loitered homeward.

Some flung stones at trees or posts which offered themselves as fair tests of marksmanship, while others plodded along in the rear-guard, making constant efforts to thoroughly dry their hair,—a matter to which they seemed to attach much importance.

In throwing stones, as in other boyish accomplishments, Ralph easily proved his supremacy, and was foolish enough even to taunt his companions with their lack of skill.

"You can't throw any better than a lot of girls!" he said, contemptuously. "Look, here is the way you throw!" and he gave a wildly farcical fling of the arm.

The boys laughed, for it was comical, but they did not take any pleasure in being reminded of their inferiority, nor did their chagrin fail to bear fruit.

When they came to Main Street,—which, of course, was the street made by the church, the village store, and the town hall,—Ralph's path diverged from the course of the rest, and he turned away, saying jauntily, "So long, boys!" and went whistling homeward.

The others walked on for a few paces in silence. All felt somewhat ashamed of their subservience to the village bully, and each was too proud to say so, or to become bolder immediately upon his departure. Indeed, they would not have called Ralph a "bully," for to them the word meant only one who fought and thrashed smaller boys, and Ralph was neither quarrelsome nor pugilistic. Yet he was a bully, for he took for himself liberties which he denied to others, and did so by force. He did not fight, it is true: but that was merely because the boys were of a higher grade than those whose fists are their sole arbiters of right and wrong.

Now, Ralph went home entirely unconscious of the impression his conduct had made upon his comrades, and no doubt would have said that they had enjoyed the afternoon quite as much as he had. But not long after his swaying figure was concealed by a turn in the road, young Plunkett said to the rest:

"Fellows, why did n't you stand by me? I had just as much right to fix his shirt as he had to duck me, had n't I?"

"Well, I said so," replied Tom Cromwell, but in a half-hearted way.

"Oh, yes! You *said* so," answered little Plunkett, "but a lot of good that did me! I had to untie the knots, all the same."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" asked Tom, a little sulkily, for he was far from being thoroughly pleased with his own conduct. "Do you want me to pound him over the head, and then to get licked by him? You know he can do it, and there's no use saying he can't. What good would it do you for me to get rolled in the mud? I'll do it, if you say it's the correct style," added Tom, dryly; "but first I'd like to see the good of it all."

Young Plunkett was one of those big-headed boys who are born to make plans. It was not the first time he had considered the problem of Ralph McGregor, and he had a general idea of what

ought to be done ; but he was not entirely satisfied with the details of his project. He was glad of this opportunity to foment a conspiracy, and promptly took advantage of it.

“ It ’s no fun having you rolled around in the mud, Tom,” he answered, smiling ; “ and, as you say, it ’s precious little use. But I ’ve got a notion — ” Here the boys all chuckled, for Plunkett’s “ notions ” were a staple joke among them. But he merely paused long enough for the laughter to ebb away, and then continued undisturbed : “ I ’ve a notion how we can fix this up all straight.” They were just then passing the school-house yard, so he said : “ Come in here and sit down for a while, and I ’ll explain it to you.”

The old gate swung open, the boys filed in, it slammed together again ; and for an hour or so a group of gleeful conspirators concentrated around the intellect of Plunkett, the boy with “ a notion how to fix it.”

They parted at dusk in the best of humor, each distributing giggles along his homeward path.

During the next week, only a very keen observer would have remarked the fact that the thoughtful brow of Ethan Plunkett was upon two special afternoons missed from its accustomed place in the school-room. The schoolmaster noted the circumstance in his little book, but attached no importance to the absences beyond a mental recognition of the warm interest some of the other scholars seemed to take in this lad, who was one of the younger boys. Indeed, the master thought he observed that looks of inquiry were directed toward the youngster upon his second return to the school, and even that the boy nodded an assent to the questions thus mutely expressed. Still, as a small boy was at that moment endeavoring to convince the teacher, by a positive manner and reiterated assertions, that Kamtchatka was an empire in South America, the master’s mind was diverted, and never recurred to the subject.

A week having passed, it easily follows that another Saturday afternoon was entitled to arrive. The season being summer, it also follows that the boys were early on the road to the swimming-beach. In fact, there seemed some concert in their meeting, for quite a squad of the boys—the same who had met at the school-house—came along together. There was also a stranger with them. He was a quiet lad, dressed in a shabby suit and a little derby hat which seemed rather old for him, and he held his head down as he walked. Close beside him walked Ethan Plunkett, and it was noticeable that the stranger was treated with much consideration by Ethan, and indeed by all the boys.

This squad walked quietly to the swimming-beach, and, strangely enough, plunged into the river without delay, as if they had come only for a bath, instead of for a frolic as usual. They seemed to be expectant, for they watched the stranger keenly.

The look of relief which was plainly visible when Ralph McGregor appeared upon the shore would indicate that his presence was at least one of the factors necessary to gratify their expectations.

"Hello, fellows," said Ralph, as he threw off his coat, "why did n't you wait for me?"

"Oh, we knew you 'd be along; and Plunkett wanted to take his visitor down to show him the beach," answered Tom Cromwell, who with careless ease was treading water not far from shore.

"That 's all right," said Ralph, good-naturedly.

"Well, I'm glad you 're not displeased with us," said Plunkett, in rather a mocking tone. Ralph, however, was not thin-skinned, and repeated, "Oh, no; it 's all right!" Then, taking a short run, he plunged into the water, diving under and coming up, with a snort and shake of the head, not far from the new boy.

"You 're Ralph McGregor?" asked the new-comer.

"Yes," replied Ralph, rather shortly, for he was not entirely

pleased to be addressed with so much assurance by a "new" boy. "What 's your name?" he asked, in turn.

"Signor Alberto," replied the youngster as quietly as if he had said Thomas Brown.

"*What?*" said Ralph, in his surprise.

"Signor Alberto," replied the boy, in the same matter-of-fact tone.

"What are you? French?" asked Ralph.

"No. Are you Scotch?" inquired the other boy.

"No. Why?"

"Because your name is McGregor," and the boy turned and swam, somewhat awkwardly, away.

Ralph struck out in his wake, and soon overtook him; Ralph's curiosity was excited, and he wanted to ask a few more questions. But just as he came abreast of the other swimmer, the stranger dived, and came up several feet further away. Ralph again swam to him, and the diving was repeated. When he came up Ralph called: "See here, Alberto, or whatever your name is, I want to talk to you."

"Well," replied the other, "what of it?"

"You keep swimming away," replied Ralph.

"Can't you swim?" asked Alberto, in a dry tone which made the other boys grin.

"Course I can, but I want to talk now."

"Well, talk,—and I 'll swim," replied the cool stranger. The boys chuckled, and Ralph's temper was a little ruffled.

"Come here!" said he, somewhat imperiously.

"I have n't time," replied Alberto; "and I 'm afraid I shall wet my feet." The last part of the reply admitted of but one construction. This irreverant stranger was evidently poking fun at the proud McGregor.

"If you don't come, I 'll come there and duck you," said Ralph; at the same time pretending to laugh as if he were only joking.

But Alberto seemed to have forgotten Ralph's existence, and was swimming, still with apparent awkwardness, near Ethan Plunkett, and conversing quietly with him. This entire ignoring of his threat provoked Ralph more than any reply could have done.

"Do you hear me?" he shouted angrily.

"I do," replied Alberto; "but your voice is powerful weak. You need a tonic." Ralph wasted no more words, but plunged into the water and swam with all his might toward this irritating fellow. At the same time the boy called Signor Alberto seemed to be making tremendous efforts to get away; but Ralph gained upon him and was soon so near that he could almost reach the boy's heels. *Almost*, but not quite. Ralph redoubled his efforts, making frantic plunges, and puffing out water like a Chinese laundryman, but, somehow, there was still just an inch or two between his hand and Alberto's heels.

The other boys roared with laughter, and it soon became clear, even to Ralph, that he was not going to catch the boy—much less duck him. It was humiliating, but Ralph's breath gave out, and he had to stop.

"You're a pretty fair swimmer," he said, trying to put a good face on the matter. "Where did you learn to swim?"

"In the Desert of Sahara," replied Alberto, "with the Eskimos."

"Oh, see here, stop fooling!" said Ralph. "Who are you, anyway?"

"You can call me an Italian cousin of Ethan Plunkett's," replied the boy, and he swam further out.

Ralph made up his mind that there was not much to be made out of so odd a fish, and swam away. Soon after he waded ashore, and, dressing, waited for the rest to come out. Ralph was somewhat silent, and, indeed, was for the first time conscious that he had lost rank in the eyes of his companions. He knew no other way

to recover what he had lost than by some feat of strength or skill. Since he had been beaten in swimming (for the new-comer had easily outdone Ralph's best efforts in the water), he thought that perhaps his strength might stand him in good stead where his skill had failed. So, when the others were dressed, Ralph proposed that they should stay a while by the lake and "have some fun." The other boys well knew what this meant, and little Plunkett, who had hitherto kept strangely in the background, said: "What 'll we do, Ralph?"

"Let 's pull on a stick."

This was Ralph's favorite amusement; he even preferred it to "snap-the-whip," though that, too, was a favorite.

So they found a stout stick, and two of the boys sat on the ground, put the soles of their feet together, and, holding the stick near the middle, pulled until one or the other was drawn to his feet or pulled over. Several of the boys declined the game—among them Alberto. But after Cromwell had with much difficulty conquered all but Ralph, the latter sat down with a confident smile, and after a short struggle pulled Cromwell over. Indeed, it seemed to him he had never conquered Tom so easily.

As he sat upon the ground, beaming with pride, and with his good humor entirely restored, little Plunkett stepped up and said modestly: "My friend Alberto thinks he would like that game—and he 's willing to try with you, if you 'll show him how."

"All right," replied Ralph, very graciously.

So Alberto sat down, and after a little teaching said he thought he understood it.

"Oh, it takes some practice," said Ralph, in a patronizing tone; "I 'll pull against you with one hand, at first." So he did; but, strange to say, Alberto pulled hard enough to make Ralph lose his hold upon the stick, and it slipped from his hand.

"You 'd better take two hands, perhaps," said Alberto, politely. "It pulls more evenly that way."

So Ralph took both hands, braced himself, smiled to think how the little foreigner would come flying through the air, exerted all his strength, and, to his intense surprise, arose gracefully, but most unwillingly, to his feet. He was beaten; and the little foreigner was actually chuckling at him.



THE TUG OF WAR.

"You 're too heavy to be very strong," remarked Alberto, critically.

"Well, I guess you 'd find me all you 'd want to tackle!" said Ralph, testily, for he was unused to this style of criticism, and found it too frank to be agreeable.

"How do you mean?" asked the other.

"Wrestling."

"What kind?" asked Alberto.

"Any kind," said Ralph, recklessly. "Come on, and I'll show you whether I'm too fat or not."

"It's all good-natured, you know?" said Alberto, in a questioning tone.

"Any way you like," said Ralph. Alberto threw off his coat and advanced toward Ralph. "Are you ready?" he asked. "Ready," said Ralph.

When Ralph got up he looked around him in a dazed way, and then asked curiously, "How did you do that?"

"That's what they call the Greco-Roman style," replied Alberto, who did not seem to have moved at all, so far as Ralph could remember.

"Are your other styles like that?"

"Something like that," replied his cool antagonist.

"Then I don't care to see any more," replied Ralph very frankly, and with much more good-nature than most boys would have shown after having been thrown to the ground like an empty sack. The boys around laughed, and Tom Cromwell said: "That's a smart cousin of yours, Plunkett!"

"Yes, he's pretty quick," replied Plunkett, very soberly, and with more modesty than was entirely natural under the circumstances.

"Are you Plunkett's cousin?" asked Ralph, suspiciously.

"I have always called myself so ever since I first knew him," replied Signor Alberto, turning away. Plunkett laughed; he could not help it.

Ralph was much chagrined, but even yet did not completely realize his downfall or have sense enough to stop where he was.

He was restless, and proposed a race to the village store. Away they went; little Plunkett first, at the start, for he was great on short distances; Tom Cromwell was next; then Ralph, saving himself for the final spurt; after him, two or three other boys, and, strangely enough, Plunkett's "cousin" was running lightly, the last of all.

Cromwell soon took the lead, but only to lose it to Ralph, and Ralph was just beginning to congratulate himself that he would be the winner when something *rolled* by him. Ralph drew up short.

It was Plunkett's "cousin"—*turning handsprings!*

That was too much. Ralph turned and fled home. He went to his room, sat down in a big arm-chair, and thought it all over. He did not go to church next day. He said he did not feel just right. He reappeared next day, and things thereafter went just about as usual—but with a difference. It was a very different Ralph McGregor who came to school on Monday—and a much better fellow the new McGregor was.

Now and then some of Ralph's old traits would show themselves for a moment, but when this happened there was likely to be a sudden interest in Plunkett's "cousin" among the boys, and solicitous inquiries about his health, and Ralph never failed to quiet down. Plunkett was reticent; but freely admitted that he did not expect another visit from Signor Alberto for some time to come.

A month or two passed, and Ralph went to the circus, which was at the county-seat near his native village. Among the performers he was surprised to recognize Plunkett's visitor! After seeing Alberto perform some wonderful feats of bareback riding, tumbling, jumping, and conjuring, Ralph said wisely to himself:

"Well, a fellow ought to follow his bent. It is n't long since he was here. It shows the youngster was cut out for the business or he never could have learned all that in so short a time!"

He told Plunkett so, when he returned home, and Plunkett said only: "Ho! ho! ho!"

But Ralph did n't see that there was anything to laugh at.

As to the conspirators, they held one more meeting than the two mentioned. It was just before the departure of Plunkett's "cousin," and resulted in the prompt collection of five dollars. This was handed to Plunkett's "cousin," and he thanked the boys and said as he turned away: "I don't like to take money from you, boys, but, after all, you made it a matter of business."

All the boys assured him that they were well satisfied.

PROFESSOR CHIPMUNK'S SURPRISING ADVENTURE

THE oak-tree selected by the committee was excellently adapted to the purpose, being deep in the woods, shady, and yet not so thickly leaved as to obstruct the audience's view of the sky, in case of hawks or other unruly members of society.

Professor A. Chipmunk, though a little dingy in coloring and somewhat thin, as indeed was natural considering his experiences, appeared to be fully conscious of the importance of the occasion and ready to do his best.

Precisely at noon he climbed to his place on one of the smaller branches, took a dainty sip of rain-water from an acorn-cup, waved his tail gracefully to the audience, and began :

QUADRUPEDS AND BIPEDS :

Your committee has told me that there is much curiosity among you in regard to my experiences during my recent captivity in the hands of that grasping and selfish race which converts our happy woodlands into desolate farms, and prefers to the sprightly and interesting dwellers of the woods the overfed and stupid slaves of the farm-yard. For the benefit of my younger hearers, I will say plainly that I refer to the ordinary Homo, commonly known as Man. [Applause.]

Most of you know that it was my misfortune to fall into the

clutches of these strange animals, and my good fortune to return again to my bereaved family, and to you, my neighbors. And I am sure I can find no more fitting occasion than the present to thank you all for having supplied my wife and children with acorns and walnuts during my absence. But for the sake of the few who may not know how it was that I became the prisoner of the slow-moving animals to which I have already referred, I will explain that I entered, in the interests of science, a sort of inclosure or artificial burrow known in their tongue as a "*trap*." My purpose in entering the inclosure was to ascertain whether it was a safe place for a squirrel to reside, and I am quite convinced by my experience that it is *not*. The trap is commodious, dark, and well sheltered; but it has the serious defect that the entrance does not always remain open. Indeed, in the case of the one I examined, no sooner had I entered it than something fell over the end, shutting out the light. As it fell I heard a peculiar sound from a bush near by, sounding like "*Igothim*."

Some of you may ask why I did not push aside the obstruction and escape. The same thought occurred to me; but, no matter how hard I pushed, it would not move. I then began to gnaw my way out, when a remarkable thing occurred. You have many of you been upon a branch when it was violently swayed by the wind. In the same way did this trap behave. It seemed to be raised from the ground and to be shaken violently; so violently, in fact, that I had to cease my attempts at gnawing my way out.

This continued for quite a time, and when it ceased the cover was opened. Glad to escape, I sprang through the opening. But, to my surprise, I found I was not free. I found myself in another inclosure made of thin, straight twigs, without bark, and harder than any wood. I think I may say without presumption that my teeth are as good as those of any rodent who may be present, but



PROFESSOR CHIPMUNK RELATING HIS ADVENTURE.

try as I might, I could make no impression upon even the smallest of those cold gray twigs.

[At this moment two blue-jays in one of the upper branches, who had already been chattering in rather an audible tone, burst into a peal of mocking laughter. A king-bird flew at them, and gave them a good pecking, whereupon they flew away toward the swamp, and the indignant audience settled down again and begged the professor to go on.]

As I picked up a few words of their language, I can inform you that this contrivance was called a "*cage*," and seemed to have been made for the purpose of retaining such wood-dwellers as might fall into these creatures' power.

Several of the young animals gathered around it and examined me closely, apparently to determine whether I was good to eat. Indeed, the youngest of them—what they call a "*Polly*"—tried to seize a piece of my tail, but was prevented by the older and greedier ones.

They seemed to think that I was not fat enough to be eaten, for they furnished me a variety of food. Among the things offered were bits of apple, a kind of sweet stone they called "*sugar*," which was like very clean ice or hard snow, a dusty sort of dry stuff known to them as "*crackers*," and a few very poor walnuts. Of course I did not feel like eating; but they would not leave me alone. They poked me with bits of stick until, seeing a good opportunity, I bit the young animal called a Polly on the end of one of her soft claws. Then she wanted to hurt me; but a larger one of the animals, known as a "*Papa*," interfered, and tied a soft white leaf around her claw, probably so that she might not scratch me.

By this time I heard a curious jingling sound, and I was soon left alone.

This jingling sound was evidently of much importance to these

curious creatures. I heard it always in the morning, at about mid-day, and after dark; and whenever it was heard, the animals, big and little, would leave me for a time long enough to eat perhaps a dozen hickory nuts.

Every part of the cage was comfortable and quiet, except one. That was a movable place into which I could crawl; but as soon as I was in it, it would slide from under my feet. But no sooner did I slide from one part than I found another beneath my feet. It was very curious. They called it a "*wheel*."

Except the continued staring and poking, nothing was done to me the first day. The queer creatures did not do any work, but rested most of the time on strange contrivances that seemed made of dead branches of trees. They chattered together now and then, but spent longer periods in gazing upon bundles of white leaves, which they turned over, examining each leaf carefully. I made up my mind they were looking for some small insect among these leaves.

I wondered whether they liked to stay shut up in their hollow homes, for they could get out into the woods if they chose. Their homes are not unpleasant in the daytime. But, at night, there was a great slamming and banging, the lights were suddenly taken away, just as the moonlight ends when a black cloud goes over the moon, and the whole place in which they lived became dark.

Then how I suffered! The air became very heavy and close. I could not sleep. The hole in which these queer animals sleep was terribly warm and oppressive, and I longed to be in the woods again.

When the light returned, the jingling sound was repeated, the Papa and the Polly and the rest entered the big hollow where I was, and repeated a form of words until I was able to remember it. They said, "*Good morning, Papa,*" "*Good morning, Polly,*" and then went out of the hollow.

After another long time, a third one of them came in and

looked very pleasantly at me. The Polly and the Papa came and stood looking in, too. Then the larger one said some words to the others, and repeated something like, "*Lethimgo*."

The Polly said, "*Whymama!*"

The other said again, "*Lethimgo*."

Then the cage was picked up and carried out of the hollow and into the field where they lived. Next the Polly worked over one side of the cage until she had made an opening in it.

Strange to say, none of them seemed to notice this opening, and of course I did not call their attention to the oversight. [Laughter.]

I waited until the Polly had run away to where the other creature stood, and then I made a quick jump through the opening, and away I went!

It did not take me long, I promise you, to make my way back to the woods, and since my return I have lived among you as usual.

My observations while in captivity may be summed up as follows:

I should advise you to avoid entering any of those peculiar square, hollow logs known as "traps," as it is much easier to enter them than to escape from them. I am sure few would be clever enough to escape as I did.

If you should be so unfortunate as to find yourself in a "cage,"—which, you remember, is made of hard gray twigs,—bite the soft claws of the creatures who poke you.

Do not eat the strange foods known as "*crackers*" or "*candy*," as they do not agree with any but men.

Large men are known as the "Papa" or "Oh-Papa," and the smaller ones as "Polly" or "Bobby." The worst kind, I believe, is the "Bobby," and the best and kindest seems to be the "Whymama."

These curious creatures all have a means of putting out the

stars and moon at night, and prefer to sleep in very hot and bad air. They also run away somewhere whenever they hear a jingle, which happens three times a day.

I thank you for your attention, and hope to be in my usual health soon.

After a vote of thanks the meeting adjourned, much impressed by the boldness and learning of Professor Chipmunk.



THE PROFESSOR ON HIS TRAVELS IN THE "TRAP."

THE SATCHEL



WAS just graduated from college, when I received a letter from my uncle Ralph, which surprised me very much, as I had never known him except by name. I had always been told by my mother that he was very eccentric, and certainly the letter was queer ; for it read :

Nephew Dick (if that 's your name): I want an assistant in my laboratory. I will pay you well. Answer at once.

UNCLE RALPH.

I was puzzled what to say in reply. I had no profession in view, and did n't like to throw away what might be a good chance. I talked it over with my mother, and she said she thought it would be worth trying and could certainly do no harm. So, not to be outdone in brevity, I answered:

Dear Uncle Ralph: If terms suit, I 'll try.

Your nephew, Dick.

I think he was pleased with the answer, for he received me very cordially, though he did n't say much. My salary was quickly and satisfactorily settled, and I took a room near my uncle's house and began my work.

At first I had so much to learn that I could n't have earned my salt; but before very long I began to see my way clearly, and I really think I made myself useful — still I could not be sure.

Strangely enough, I never could tell what my uncle was trying to accomplish. I made many mixtures of chemicals, prepared all sorts of apparatus, but was never allowed to see what my uncle was about. Whenever I had prepared any materials, he would carry them off into a little private room of which he always kept the key upon his watch-chain. No one was allowed to enter this room, and I soon learned that it was wisest to say nothing concerning it. Not being inquisitive, I did not pry into the mystery, but did whatever I was told to do, without asking any questions.

As time went on, I could see that my uncle was becoming very nervous and irritable over his work. Always a silent man, he now seldom spoke a word.

One day he sent me to buy some chemicals, giving me a list which he had written out for me. Upon examining the list I found that the articles would make a large package, so I picked up my little traveling-bag and started out.

Some of the substances required were rare, and I was obliged to ask at a number of places before I succeeded in finding them; and it was dusk when I reached the house.

I heard my uncle calling me as I came in, and found him very impatient.

"Did you get them all?" he asked, as soon as he saw me.

"Yes; after some trouble," I replied.

"Where are they?" he inquired.

"Here," I said, and I handed him the bag.

He took it without a word, and immediately retired into his private room.

During his absence, I busied myself in the laboratory in put-

ting everything in order. I worked away for a long while — how long I cannot exactly tell — when suddenly I heard an explosion in my uncle's little room, followed by a cry.

I rushed to the door and knocked.

“What is it?” he growled.

“What is the matter?” I cried.

“Nothing! Don't be foolish!” said my uncle. “Nothing can hurt me!”

I went back to the laboratory, and, having nothing further to do, sat down to wait for his coming.

Again came the explosion, followed by the same cry.

I started up, and, before I thought, I cried aloud, “You're not hurt, are you?”

The door opened suddenly, and my uncle came out, looking very much excited.

“Dick,” said he, “go home. Here is your bag. I sha'n't need your help to-night.”

I took what I thought was my bag, and went home to my room.

When I lighted my student-lamp I saw that, instead of my traveling-bag, my uncle had given me an old, dusty, wrinkled, and battered leather satchel, which looked as though it might be a century old.

I laughed, and tried to open it. It was locked. After puzzling over the lock until I was tired, I opened my closet door and flung the satchel upon the highest shelf.

“To-morrow,” said I, “I'll exchange it for my own bag.”

I am afraid Uncle Ralph's treatment was beginning to affect my temper. I did n't like the way he had treated me that night. Then he had n't paid me my salary for a long time, and my bills were coming in faster than I could pay them.

It is very discouraging to do other men's work, especially when

you are not allowed to see the results of your labor; and I had worked some months without a single hint of what I was about. I began to believe I had made a mistake. What good would it do me to work away in the dark, learning little or nothing, and without hope of doing better? My uncle would tell me nothing, and was provoked by being even questioned.

I became very much discouraged over my prospects, and wondered whether I ought not to confess I had made a mistake, and to begin the study of some regular profession.

How long I sat thinking, I cannot tell; but I was aroused by the faint flicker of my lamp as it went out, leaving me in perfect darkness.

As I groped about my room, looking for matches, I heard a rustling which seemed to come from the other side of the room. Then came tiny knockings, irregularly, and muffled shouting, as though far away.

By listening more intently I heard the sounds plainly enough to distinguish the squeaking of mice and — could I be mistaken? — a scream; very faint, it is true, but still a scream of fright.

“Ah!” said I to myself, “there must be mice in the closet! But what can the scream be?”

I went to the closet, and, opening the door, was amazed to see that the upper part was faintly lighted, as though by a big firefly. Puzzled at this, I brought a chair, and, climbing upon it, saw — a grand battle. Upon one end of the shelf was a flying host of mice. How they scurried away! Some jumped to the floor; some seemed to merely vanish, and they were gone!

While smiling at their panic, what was my surprise to hear from the other end of the shelf some one addressing me in a piping, little voice.

“Eh?” I exclaimed, “— did any one speak?”

"I had the honor!" the voice replied.

Turning, I saw upon the shelf a diminutive figure carrying a little lantern in one hand, and something like a needle in the other.

Before I could recover from my astonishment, and not before I had been asked sarcastically whether I should know him the next time we met, the little man went on:

"This is a pretty way to treat me,—is n't it?"

"What in the world—what does this mean?" I blundered out.

"Well! I like that," replied the pygmy in a scornful tone; "asking what this means,—after having kept me shut up in that old leather satchel for over two thousand years! Why, I should have been starved before long; my provisions were almost gone, I can tell you! Perhaps you think I'm not hungry now? Oh, no! of course not!—and you want to know what this means?"

Here he burst out laughing so loudly that I plainly heard it.

"I should be glad to do anything in my power to aid you," I began, wishing to do my best to pacify the little fellow; "but as for having kept you shut up for twenty centuries, why, my dear fellow, that's simply absurd, for I am only twenty-three years old now!"

"Oh, see here," he answered scornfully, "that's a little more than I can stand! You've played the innocent game long enough; you can't fool me that way again. Why, I suppose you will deny that your name is Trancastro, next?" and he hopped up and down in a rage.

"Tran— which? Tran— what?" I began.

"That's right, that's right!" cried the little imp in a perfect fury. "Go on—deny everything!"

"See here!" I cried, now out of patience with his folly, "I don't know anything about you or your Tran-what-you-may-call-him, and if you had n't kicked up such a racket in my closet I

never would have come near you! I wish I had n't, and then the mice would have finished you—and a good riddance!”

As I paused for breath the little man held his lantern as near my face as possible, and after a long, earnest look, said with great gravity and deliberation:

“I think I must have made a mistake!”

Then, turning suddenly, he gave a great skip and shouted out, “And then—I am free!”

“Certainly you are, so far as I am concerned,” I replied carelessly; “but I can’t imagine what all this fuss is about. So long as you are pleased, I suppose I must be satisfied.”

Meanwhile he had continued to jump and whirl about, until he dropped his lantern and it went out, leaving us in the dark. Then he calmed down enough to

say, “What can *you* know about it? You—only twenty-three years old!” He chuckled as though this were a great joke at my expense, and went on, “If you will offer me a chair and something to eat, I’ll tell you the whole story.”

So I stepped down from the chair, lighted my student-lamp, and offered my little guest my hand. Into it he climbed, and I deposited him upon the table under the light, where I could see him plainly.

He was about six inches in height, and dressed in what seemed to be mouse-skin. He wore a little belt, and a helmet the size



“THE LITTLE MAN HELD HIS LANTERN NEAR MY FACE AND SAID: ‘I THINK I MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE!’”

of a thimble. His face was unwrinkled, but intelligent enough for any age.

Seeing he was unwilling to be stared at, I broke the silence by saying, "I am sorry I cannot offer you a chair—but mine are too large, I am afraid." I thought he might be hurt by the hint.

"Not at all!" he replied politely, now that he had convinced himself I was not that awful Tran-somebody. "See here!"

He beckoned to my favorite easy-chair. At once it rose gently into the air, and, dwindling down to a size suitable for the little wretch, dropped softly down upon the table beside him.

Ignoring my exclamations, he seated himself comfortably within it, and, looking up at me, said, as though nothing had happened, "I said I would tell you all about it, did n't I?"

"Yes," I answered, leaning eagerly forward.

"Well, I'll not!" said he, bluntly.

"You'll not?—and why not?" I asked.

"Oh," said he, calmly crossing his little legs, "you could n't understand it."

"Perhaps I could," I replied, smiling indulgently. "Just try me."

"Do you know what *dnax* is?" he asked, apparently hoping that I might.

"No, I can't say I do—exactly," I confessed unwillingly.

"Then of course you could n't understand it—for that's the very beginning of it! But no matter. Let's change the subject. Is there anything I can do for you in return for your hospitality to a hungry guest?"

"I beg your pardon! I quite forgot." And I rang the bell.

When the servant came, I ordered supper for two. This strange order caused the servant to gaze in silent astonishment. I repeated the order, however, and she hurried away without asking any questions. Returning, she placed the supper upon the table,

without seeing the frantic retreat of the little man as she approached the table with the heavy tray.

"What an awkward blockhead!" exclaimed the angry little fellow. I made no answer, being puzzled over the proper way to ask my small friend to eat with a knife and fork larger than himself.

But, as I hesitated, the mysterious beckoning process again took place, and one half of the contents of the tray diminished to a size convenient for his use. He ate almost greedily, like a starving man. I watched him in silent wonder until he seemed to be satisfied.

Then, pushing back his chair, he said gratefully: "A very nice supper! I should like to return your kindness in some way. You little know what a service you have done me in releasing me from that cruel Trancast —"

Here he broke off suddenly and remained in a brown study. He seemed so melancholy that I interrupted his thoughts by asking:

"And what could you do for me?" He brightened up again as I spoke, and answered:

"Who can tell? What are your troubles?"

"Well," said I thoughtfully, "I have n't many. But I should like the advice of some one older and wiser than I am."

"I shall not say how *wise* I may be," said the little man soberly;



"‘PERHAPS,’ SAID THE LITTLE MAN, ‘HAVING LIVED FORTY CENTURIES, I MAY BE OLD ENOUGH TO ADVISE A YOUNG MAN OF TWENTY-THREE.’”

“but perhaps, having lived forty centuries, I may be old enough to advise a young man of twenty-three.”

I looked up, expecting to see him smiling, but he was as sober as a judge. So I told him all about my uncle and my work, and concluded by asking him what he thought I ought to do. He seemed intensely interested, and remained silent some moments after I had finished. I waited more anxiously for his opinion than I should have liked to admit.

At length he said solemnly, “Bring your uncle to me!”

“Bring —” I repeated, in amazement, “bring my —”

“Bring your uncle to me!” he repeated firmly, and so solemnly that I never thought of resisting.

“Oh, very well,” I said hastily; “but how in the world am I to do it?”

“Easily enough!” he explained; “write him a note!”

“But what shall I say?” I asked helplessly.

“You said he was interested in chemistry?” asked the strange little fellow.

“I believe he cares for nothing else,” I replied.

“Very well. Now write this: ‘I have made a discovery to-night such as you never dreamed of. Come at once!’ That will bring him,” said my guest.

Why I was so easily bullied by the manikin I cannot tell; but I wrote the note and sent it at once.

“Now,” resumed my little guest, “what else can I do for you?”

“Nothing,” I replied, laughing; “unless you will pay my bills for me!”

“With pleasure,” he answered gravely; “let me see them.”

I brought the bills, and he went over them very carefully.

“Hm — hm — very good!” he said, when he had finished his examination. “You have not been very extravagant. I’ll reduce them for you!”

He began beckoning, as he had beckoned to the chair and the tea-tray, and I smiled, expecting to see the papers grow smaller and smaller. But when he stopped I could see no change, although he seated himself as though well satisfied. As he said nothing, I finally ventured to say:

“Well!”

“Well,” he replied; “look at your bills!”

I picked them up and was astonished to see that the amounts had dwindled from dollars to cents, until each bill was for only a hundredth part of what it had been.

“But that is nonsense!” I said, looking up angrily. “I’m not a baby! What good will that do?”

“You’re only twenty-three,” he said doubtfully; and, smiling as a knock was heard at the door, he made me a sign to open it.

I did so, and there stood my tailor, Mr. Mewlett. I frowned, for I owed him more than a hundred dollars. But he smiled politely, saying, “Could you oblige me with that dollar or two you owe me? I need a little change to-night.”

I stared at him in wonder; but, thinking it wise to ask no questions, I took his bill from the pile on the table and handed it to him.

He read it aloud: “One dollar and fourteen cents.”

I counted out the money. He receipted the bill and left me, seeming perfectly contented.

I dropped into a chair, too much puzzled to say a word.

Just then the door banged open wide, and in came my uncle, puffing and blowing with the exertion of climbing the stairs.

“Well, on what fool’s errand have you brought me here—” he began; but suddenly I heard a shriek from the pygmy on the table. As I turned, he began beckoning—beckoning—beckoning, as if he were frantic.

I turned to look at my uncle. He was gone.

Then I turned again to the little man on the table. What a sight met my eyes!

There stood upon the table the miniature image of my uncle, staring with wide-open eyes at the little figure of my guest. For a moment they glared at each other — and then, before I could interfere, they were fighting for their lives. It was over in a second. My uncle was too old and feeble to be a match for the wiry little warrior in leather. As they separated, my uncle seemed to be wounded, for he staggered an instant, and then fell backward, staining the cloth like an overturned bottle of red ink.



"BEFORE I COULD INTERFERE THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES."

"You scoundrel!" I cried, starting forward in anger; "what have you done?"

For a moment the little fellow had no breath to answer. He panted helplessly, and at length gasped out:

"It is — but — justice! It is Trancastro!"

"Trancastro?" I exclaimed — "that was my uncle! Explain. I cannot understand!"

"Do you know what *dnax* is?" he asked, as he wiped his sword on a napkin.

"No!" I shouted.

"Then you *could n't* understand," he said, mournfully shaking his head.

Enraged by his answer, I rushed for the table; but, before I could reach them, my uncle struggled to his feet and resumed the conflict, using his umbrella most valiantly. I paused a moment, hoping he might yet conquer, but the fight was too unequal. By a skilful twist of his opponent's wrist my uncle's umbrella was sent flying out of his hand. Being disarmed, he sank upon one knee and begged for mercy.

"Trancastro!" cried the victor, "you deserve no better fate than the cruel death you meant for me!"

"Oh, have mercy!" cried my uncle.

"Mercy?" repeated the manikin, in a cruel tone; "and did *you* have mercy, Trancastro, when I hung for so many weary years in your cage-dungeon beneath the floating Castle of Volitana? Did *you* have mercy, I say, when the black cat broke through the ice-wall, and the witch changed me to a frozen mastodon? No! And where is the Princess of the Rosy Flame? Where is the Emerald of Golconda?"

My uncle hung his head and attempted no reply.

"Come," repeated the stranger; "I have waited for this meeting for centuries. Draw and defend yourself!"

"I have only an umbrella," my uncle objected.

"Then draw your umbrella!" was the relentless reply. As the little fellow advanced with sword on guard, I recovered from my feeling that this incident was a mere puppet-show. My uncle was about to be slain before my eyes.

I could not stand this. The honor of the family forbade me to remain neutral. I rushed to the table, crying, "Here! here!—this has gone quite far enough!"

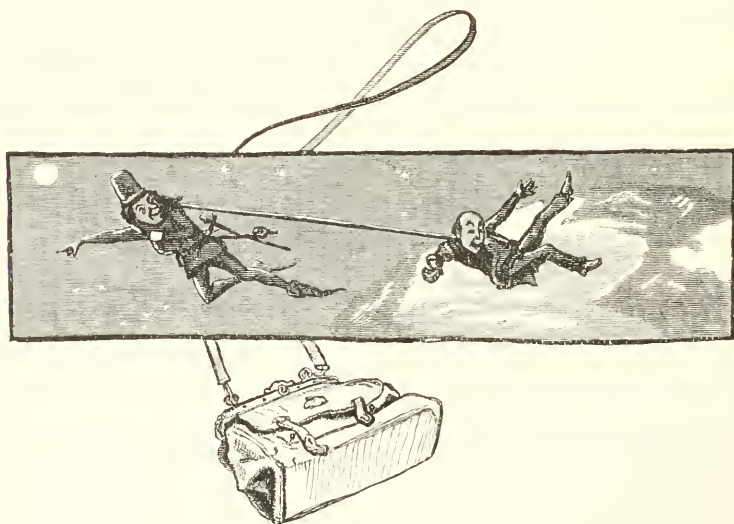
Again the beckoning. I became in a moment a third pygmy upon my own table.

"Now," exclaimed the triumphant warrior, "we are upon equal terms! Come on!"

I had no weapon. I dared not interfere. While I stood hesitating, the little tyrant made a slip-knot from one of my curtain-cords, threw the noose over my uncle's neck, and rose into the air, dragging his victim after him. I heard a breaking of glass, and, regaining my natural size in a moment, rushed to the window only to see them flying away!

All that remained to convince me that I could not be mistaken was the stain upon the cloth, the little arm-chair, and the miniature supper. I searched the room, but found nothing.

Until now I have never told the story—for who would have credited it? But any one who believes my story, and would like to see what remains of Trancastro and his victim, has only to open the battered little satchel, and there can still be seen the little chair, the little knife and fork, and all the relics left by my guest. No unbeliever shall ever see them.



GOOD NEIGHBORS

WE once had a family of giants for neighbors. Not museum giants, I mean *real* giants. I never asked just how big they were, but you can judge for yourself after I have told you about them.

Perhaps I would n't have taken the house if I had known that the giants lived so near by, for I did n't know much about such people then ; but I did n't discover that their house was next ours until I had made the bargain with the agent. I had asked him all about everything I could think of—all about stationary wash-tubs, malaria, mosquitos, the milk-man, the ice-man, the letter-man, and all the other kinds of men—but I never thought to ask about giants. No man, however prudent, can think of everything. But as I was shutting the front gate, after I had said I would take the house for a year, I saw a footprint in the road. The footprint that Robinson Crusoe saw surprised him, but even Crusoe did n't see such a footprint as this, for it was nearly as big as a boat.

"What 's that?" I asked the agent.

"What? Where?" he asked, as uneasily as if I had discovered water in the cellar, or a leak in the roof.

"That—there!" I answered, pointing to the footprint.

"Oh, *that*!" he answered. "That must be the footprint of Mr. Megalopod."

"It seems to cover considerable space," I suggested.

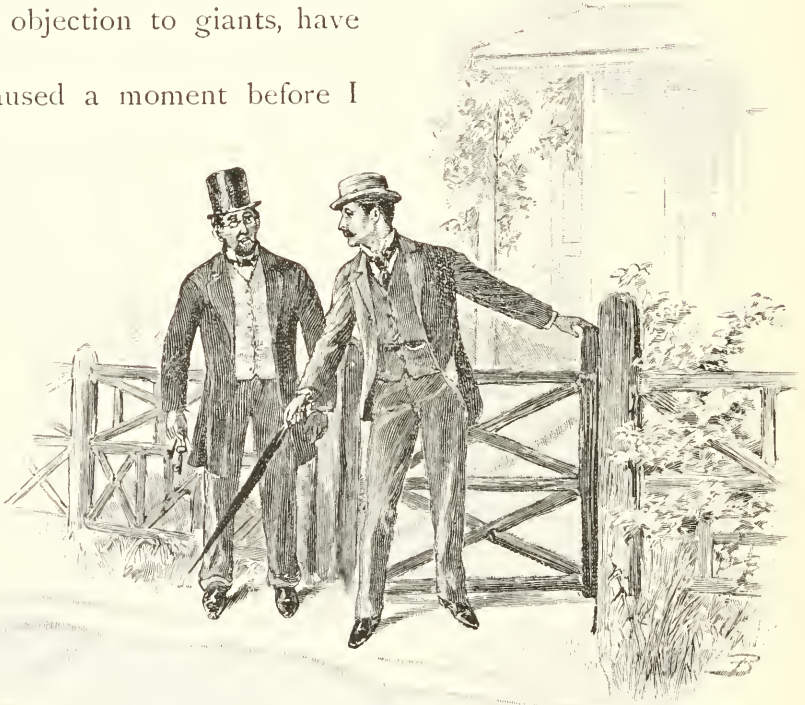
"Yes," he admitted. Even an agent could n't deny that. "He 's

a giant. Did n't I mention that you would have a giant for a neighbor? I thought I spoke of it."

"No," I said; "you did n't speak of it. You said that it was a pleasant neighborhood. Perhaps that is what you had in mind."

"Possibly," he answered. "You have no objection to giants, have you?"

I paused a moment before I



"‘THAT MUST BE THE FOOTPRINT OF MR. MEGALOPOD,’ SAID THE AGENT.”

replied. It depended on the kind of giant. If it was one of the Blunderbore kind, even a foot-ball player might have been forgiven a slight preference for ordinary-sized neighbors.

"Well," I said at last, "I don't profess to be a 'Hop-o'-my-Thumb,' or 'Jack the Giant-killer.' What sort of a giant is Mr. Megalopod?"

"The very best!" the agent said. "We did think of asking more rent for this house, because of the entertainment children would find in seeing a giant or two every day. But we decided we would n't charge for it, after all. Mr. Megalopod is a thorough gentleman — and so are the rest of the family. Mrs. Megalopod and the children are charming in every way. You will be glad to know them, I'm sure! Good day!"

The agent left me gazing at the footprint. He had other business in the town, and I had to take an early train for the city.

I thought that my wife and children would be uneasy about the giants, but I was greatly mistaken. They were eager to see the family, and could hardly wait to be properly moved. My son and daughter began to put on airs over their playfellows, and to promise their best friends that they might have the first chance to come out and see the giant family.

When we first moved, the Megalopods were absent from their house, and it was several days before they returned. They lived in the suburbs on purpose to avoid observation, and usually went about their journeys by night so as to attract as little attention as possible.

The first time I saw Mr. Megalopod was on a Monday morning. I don't know why it is, but I am more likely to be late on Monday morning than on any other day of the week, and I was late that morning. In fact, I should have missed my train for the city if it had not been for Mr. Megalopod.

My way to the station passed near to his enormous house. I walked just as fast as I could, and if I had been a few years younger I would have run. Just as I came opposite to the giant's gateway I took out my watch; I found I had just seven minutes in which

to catch the train. Now, although the advertisement said our house was only three minutes' walk from the station, it did n't occur to me until afterward that the agent probably meant it was three minutes' walk for Mr. Megalopod. It certainly was a good ten minutes' scramble for me. So, as I looked at my watch, I said aloud:

"Too late! I have lost the train! I would n't have missed it for a hundred dollars!"

"Excuse me!" I heard a tremendous voice apparently coming from the clouds; "if you will allow me, I will put you on the train!"

Before I could say a word, I was picked up and raised some thirty or forty feet into the air, and held safely and comfortably in the giant's great hand. Then Mr. Megalopod started for the station.

"You are Mr. Megalopod, I presume," I said.

"What?" he said. "You see, I can't hear you. Here is a speaking-trumpet."

So saying, he took a great fireman's-trumpet from his vest-pocket, and offered it to me with his other hand. I repeated my remark through the trumpet, at the top of my lungs.

"Yes," he said. "You are our new neighbor, no doubt."

"I am," I shouted; "and I'm very glad to make your acquaintance."

"You're not afraid of me?" he asked with a smile.

"Not at all," I yelled back.

"That's pleasant," he said with much satisfaction. "The last people moved away because they were afraid I might step on their children. It's absurd; I never step on children. I would n't do such a thing!"

"Of course not!" I shouted.

"No. It would be an accident if I stepped on anything. You yourself might step on an ant or a beetle, you know. But I am very careful. Well, here you are at the station," and he put me

gently on the platform. "I seldom go to the city, myself; and when I do I walk. Good day."

"Good-by," I said; "and I'm much obliged to you for the little lift."

"Don't mention it," he said. "I like to be neighborly. Any time you're in a hurry, let me know."

"Thank you," I replied. "I'll do as much for you—in some other way. Good-by."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Megalopod, "but—could you give me back the trumpet? You won't need it in the city, unless you are a fireman, of course."

"It was mere absence of mind," I called through the trumpet; and then I gave it back to him, and watched him take the two or three steps that brought him to the turn in the road.

"A big fellow, is n't he?" I said to the station agent.

"Yes," he said; "he's a fortune to the express company. Every time he has a pair of boots sent home, it takes nearly a freight car."

The arrival of the train ended our conversation.

I did n't see the Megalopods again for several days. My family did, and told me many interesting things about them. They seemed to be very pleasant neighbors. Their children met ours once or twice, while playing, and they became excellent friends.

Before long they came to call upon us. We used to sit on the lawn—on chairs, of course—Saturday afternoon and during the summer evenings. They came on Saturday. We received them cordially, but hardly knew how to ask them to sit down. They talked pleasantly about the neighborhood, and spoke especially of the beautiful view.

"You surprise me," I said. "It seems to me that we are too much shut in here by the trees."

"I forgot," said Mrs. Megalopod, laughing. "*We* can see over the trees."

"That is a great advantage," answered my wife, through Mrs. Megalopod's trumpet; for both giants were thoughtful enough to carry these aids to conversation.

"Oh, yes," replied the giantess; "size has advantages. But, on the other hand, it brings inconveniences. You can hardly imagine. Now, take such a thing as next Monday's washing, for instance. I have to do all our washing. Even if we could afford to pay a laundress, she would n't be able to manage our clothes, not to speak of our table-cloths and other larger pieces. Then, for a clothes-line, nothing will serve us but a ship's cable. Then, too, everything we have must be made to order. It is hard to get along with so large a family. Sometimes I 'm tempted to let John go into a museum; but so far we have succeeded in keeping the museum manager from the door."

"What is your business?" I shouted to Mr. Megalopod.

"Suspension bridges," he replied. "It pays well whenever I can get work; but they don't build bridges every day in the week—I wish they would!" and he laughed till the windows rattled in the house near by.

"Careful, John," said Mrs. Megalopod, warningly. Then turning to my wife she remarked, "John forgets sometimes that his laughing is dangerous. He was in an office building one day—in the great lower story, one of the few buildings that has a door large enough to let him in. Some one told a funny story, and he began to laugh. It cost him several hundred dollars to repair the windows. So I have to remind him to be cautious when he hears a really good joke."

Here my son Harry asked me to lend him the trumpet for a minute.

"Mr. Megalopod," he called, "would you mind doing me a great favor?"

"Not at all — if it is large enough," Mr. Megalopod replied very politely.

"Then will you get my ball for me? It went up on the roof the other day, and it is in the gutter now."

"Quick! give me the trumpet," I said to Harry, as Mr. Megalopod rose. Then I shouted, "I beg you won't put yourself out for such a trifle —!" but he was out of hearing before I had finished.

He soon returned with the ball, and gave it to Harry.

"Lend me the trumpet, Papa," said Harry. "I'm much obliged to you," he shouted.

"Don't mention it," said the giant, seating himself. I forgot to mention that while we were deciding what to give them to sit upon — we had thought of their sitting upon the top of the piazza, but were afraid it would break down with them — Mr. Megalopod had opened out a sort of a walking-stick he carried, and made it into a very comfortable stool, while his wife had a similar portable chair. They were always thoughtful and considerate, as, indeed, I might have known from their speaking-trumpets. Do you suppose, if you were a giant, you would remember to carry a speaking-trumpet for the use of other people? It is such little traits as these that endear giants to their friends. It is not hard to carry a speaking-trumpet in your vest-pocket, but it is the remembering to do so that shows the big-hearted giant.

Soon after they had made their call upon us, my wife told me one morning, while I was shaving, that we ought to return the call soon.

"Of course," I said, stropping my razor slowly and thoughtfully. "Of course. I mean to go very soon. Very soon. I had meant to go several days ago."

"Yes; I know," said my wife. "But when shall we go? To-morrow?"

"Well," I said, between strokes of the razor, "you see to-morrow — is — Saturday. And, as — it is —," here I stopped the razor, "the only holiday I have during the week, I hardly like to give it up to make a call."

"Yes, dear," she replied, "but it is the only time we have when we can go together."

"Well, married men are not required to make calls," I said.

"I suppose I can leave our cards," she said.

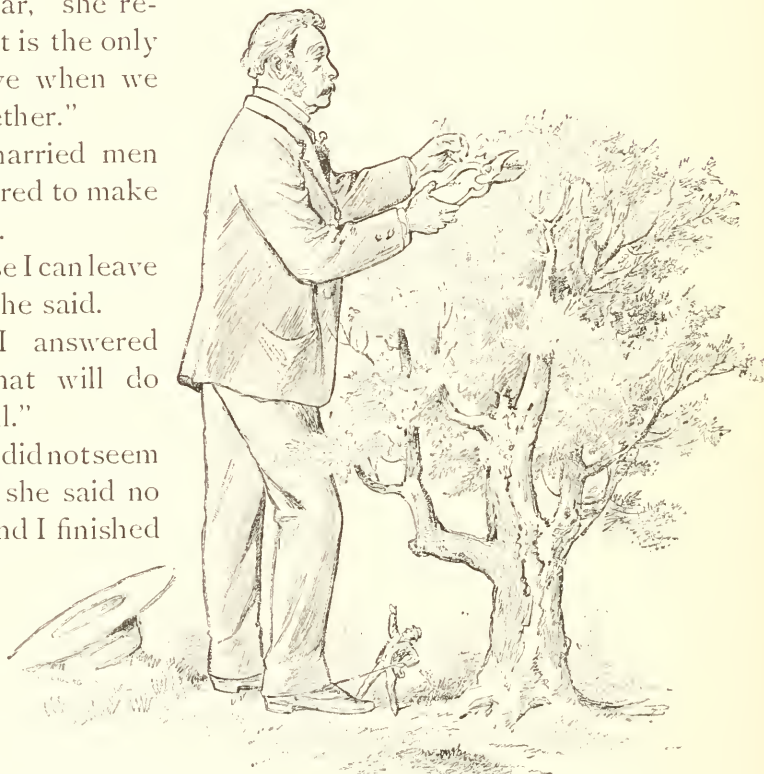
"Yes," I answered eagerly, "that will do perfectly well."

My wife did not seem pleased, but she said no more then, and I finished my shaving. I was n't cut but once.

So my wife left our cards.

When I next met

Mr. Megalopod it was about two weeks later. He did not return my bow, and apparently did not see me. I went and pulled his



"I PULLED HIS SHOE-STRING TO ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION."

shoe-string to attract his attention. He was pruning the top of a great chestnut-tree that stood in his front yard.

He handed me the trumpet, but did not show in any other way that he had noticed my presence.

"Mr. Megalopod," I said, "is there any trouble at your house?"

"Oh, no," he answered shortly and stiffly.

"You did n't return my bow," I said, in what I meant to be a tone of reproach; but it is very hard to put reproachful inflections into your voice when you are trying to shout loud enough to impress a giant.

"No," he said slowly; "I did n't know that you cared to keep up our acquaintance. If you did n't, I preferred not to force myself upon you."

"Why, you must be laboring under a mistake," I called back. "What have we done to offend you?" I was anxious to know, for I did n't like to think of there being any unpleasantness between ourselves and the giants.

"I usually overlook trifles," said Mr. Megalopod; "but when you did n't return our call, I thought you meant that you did n't care to continue the acquaintance!"

"My dear sir," I said hastily, "my wife left cards."

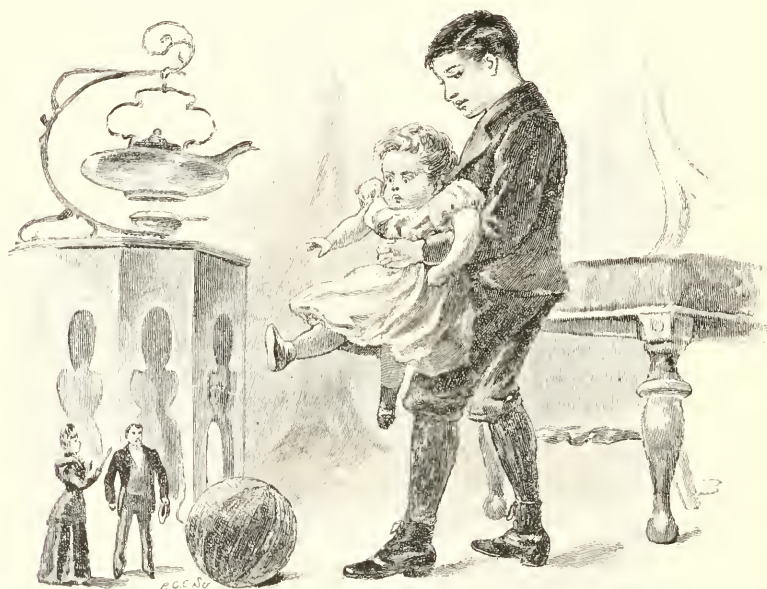
"Oh, did she?" said the giant, pleasantly. "Then I suppose Mrs. Megalopod did n't notice them. They were put into the card-tray, no doubt, and she must have failed to see them."

"No doubt that 's it," I said. "They were only the usual size. I hope you will believe that it was only an accident."

"Certainly," he said; "I had forgotten that you are not used to our ways. Our friends usually have cards written for them by sign-painters on sheets of bristol-board. We are so apt to lose the little cards."

"I see," I replied.

Shortly afterward my wife and I went to call on the Megalopods. I cannot pretend to describe all the curious things in their house. When we rang the bell,—the lower bell, for there was one for ordinary-sized people,—we nearly fell down the steps. There came the peal of an enormous gong as big as those you find in great terminal railroad stations. When the door opened, it



WE CALL UPON THE MEGALPODS.

seemed as if the side of a house had suddenly given way. The pattern on the hall carpet showed roses four or five feet wide, and the hat-stand was so high that we never saw it at all. We walked under a hall chair, and thought its legs were pillars.

Just as we entered the reception-room we heard a terrible shout, "Oh, look out!" and a great worsted ball, some four feet

in diameter, almost rolled over us. The Megalopod baby had thrown it to one of his brothers. It was a narrow escape. The brother picked up the baby to carry him away.

"Oh, don't take the sweet little thing—" my wife began; but she stopped there, for "the sweet little thing" was as large as two or three ordinary men.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the boy, "but we can't trust baby with visitors. He puts everything into his mouth, and—"

My wife cheerfully consented that the Megalopod baby should be taken to the nursery during our call.

Mrs. Megalopod offered us two tiny chairs. They were evidently part of the children's playthings. "If you would rather sit in one of our chairs," she suggested, "I shall be glad to assist you to one, but I would rather not. To tell the truth," she added, with some confusion, "one of our visitors once fell from a foot-stool, and broke his leg. Since then I have preferred they should take these."

We took the small chairs. As it was dusk, Mrs. Megalopod struck a match to light the gas. It was a giant's parlor-match, and the noise and burst of flame was like an explosion. My wife clutched my arm in terror for a moment, while Mrs. Megalopod begged our pardon and blamed herself for her thoughtlessness.

We had a very pleasant call, and the good relations between the families were entirely restored. In fact, as we were leaving, Mrs. Megalopod promised to send my wife a cake made by herself. It came later, and was brought by the Megalopod boy. By cutting it into quarters, we got it through the front door without breaking off more than five or six lumps of a pound or two each. As it was a plum-cake, it kept well. I think there is nearly a barrellful of it left yet; but we reserve it for visitors, as we got tired of plum-cake after a year or so.

The Megalopods were always kind neighbors. Once they did us a great service.

There was a farmer who lived in the valley near us, and he owned a very cross bull. One day the bull broke his chain, and came charging up the road just as my little boy was on his way to school. I don't know what would have been the result if the Megalopod baby (then a well-grown child of about twenty-five feet) had not come toddling down the road. The bull was pursuing my boy, who was running for his life. The baby giant had on red stockings, and these attracted the bull's attention. He

charged on the baby, and tried to toss his shoes. This amused the child considerably, and he laughed at the bull's antics as an ordinary baby might laugh at the snarling and bitings of a toothless puppy.

"I take oo home," he said, and picking up the angry bull, he toddled off down the road.

My boy came home much frightened, but almost as much amused. I learned afterward that Mr. Megalopod carried the bull back to the farmer and gave the man a severe talking to.

But we felt grateful, and so we decided to ask Mr. and Mrs. Megalopod to dinner. It meant a great deal, as you will see; but as we had just come



THE BULL CHARGED ON THE BABY.

into a large legacy from an estate that had been in litigation for many years, we took pleasure in showing our gratitude and our good-will

toward the family. First we had a large and elegant teething-ring made to order for the baby. It was a foot through and several feet in diameter. The baby enjoyed it very much, and was somewhat consoled for the loss of the bull, which he had wished to keep as a pet.

I hired the sign-painter in a village not far away to write out the invitation for us upon the largest sheet of cardboard I could get in the city. It was ten feet by fifteen in size, and when inscribed looked truly hospitable. It read as usual—requesting the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Megalopod at dinner on the 20th. We had to send it by express. The expressman wanted us to roll it; but I did n't think it would be just the thing. So it was sent flat in an envelop made specially for it. They sent an acceptance nearly as large, and were kind enough to send later an informal note saying that they would bring their own plates, knives and forks, and so on.

“How thoughtful of them!” said my wife, who had been somewhat puzzled about how to set the table.

I had told the butcher and other tradesmen about the dinner, and they were to furnish ample provision. I had expected that they would be delighted to get the large orders; but one of them explained to me that after all it made no great difference. “For,” said he, “if they had stayed at home, they would have ordered the same things nearly, anyway.” But it was different with the confectioner. I ordered forty gallons of ice-cream, two thousand macaroons, and eighty pounds of the best mixed candies.

“It's for a large picnic?” he suggested.

“The largest kind,” I replied, for we were of course to dine in the open air. In order to provide against rain, I hired a second-hand circus-tent, and had it set up in our front yard, where the table had already been constructed by a force of carpenters.

By stooping as they came in, and seating themselves near the center, our guests were not uncomfortable in the tent.

My wife and I had a smaller table and chairs set upon the large table, and though we did not feel altogether comfortable sitting with our feet on the table-cloth, we did not quite see how to avoid it.

The first course was much enjoyed, except that Mr. Megalopod was so unlucky as to upset his soup (served in a silver-plated metal plate), and run the risk of drowning us. Mrs. Megalopod, however, was adroit enough to catch us up before the inundation overwhelmed us. The giant apologized profusely, and we insisted that it was of no consequence.

When we came to the turkeys (which Mrs. Megalopod said were dainty little birds), I was afraid Mr. Megalopod was not hungry, for he could not finish the two dozen; but he explained that he seldom ate birds, as he preferred oxen. In the next course I found that Mr. Megalopod was looking for the salt. I handed him the salt-cellar, but it was too small for him to hold.

"Have you any rock-salt?" he asked with frankness. "I can never taste the fine salt."

Luckily we had bought a large quantity of the coarsest salt for making ice-cream, and I had several boxes brought, and sent up from the ground on an elevator.

The waiter, frightened half out of his wits, set the boxes as close to the giant as he dared, and tried hard not to run when moving away.

Strangely enough, the only thing that ran short was the water. It would n't run fast enough to give the giant a full drink of water. He was very polite about it, but the rock-salt had made him thirsty. At last I sent down to the Megalopods' house, and hired the giant's boy to bring a pail (one of their pails—it was about eight feet high) full of spring water. So that little difficulty was pleasantly arranged.

After the dinner was over, the giants went home, saying that they had never passed a pleasanter afternoon.

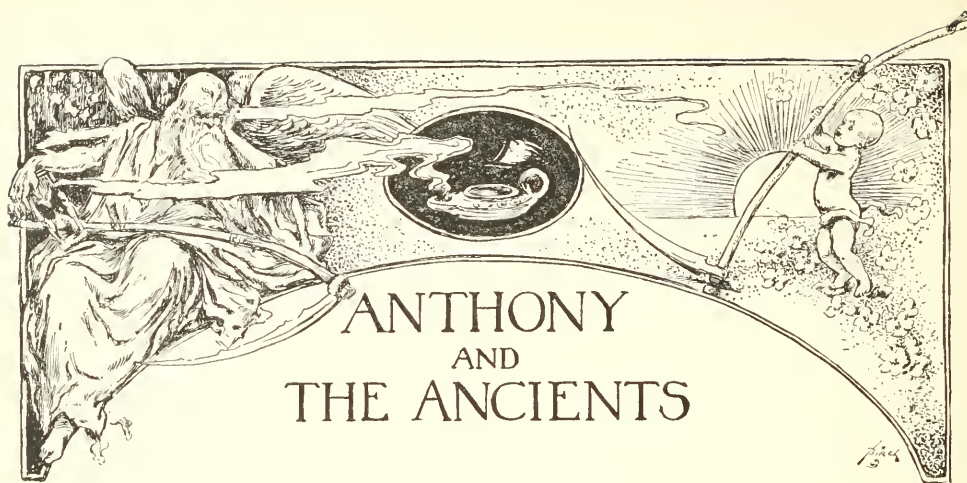
We were equally pleased, and my wife said that the most agreeable neighbors we had ever known were certainly Mr. and Mrs. Megalopod.



GOOD-BY TO THE MEGALPODS.

“There is nothing small about them,” I said, warmly, “and they certainly take wide views of everything.”

“Yes,” she agreed, “even with our simple little dinner they seemed immensely delighted.”



ANTHONY told me the story, after he came to know me well. He said I might write about it, but did n't care to have his real name given. So I have given him another name. Perhaps he dreamed it, but as I dislike stories that are only dreams, I won't say he did. It probably is n't a literal fact, but you can perhaps make it useful if you will seek for a sort of lesson in it. If you don't see any lesson in it, then the story does n't apply to you. Here is the way he told it to me, as nearly as I can write it down.

I went to the museum and after looking at other departments, came late in the afternoon to the place where they had ancient pottery. I was looking at a case of old lamps, when one of the attendants opened the cabinet door to put in a specimen. I knew him by sight, and he bowed. Then I spoke to him:

"I wish I knew how those lamps were used."

"Come to my room and I'll show you," he answered pleasantly.

So I went into his working-room, and he took an ancient lamp from a shelf. He filled it with lard-oil, I think, put a wick into the

spout—he made a rude wick from a piece of twisted linen rag—and lighted it.

The lamp gave a dim and flickering light.

“I wish I could see it in the dark,” I said, after a minute. “All right,” he said; “just take it into that store-room,” and he pointed to one of the doors, “shut the door, and you will find it as dark as Egypt.”

I took the lamp, shielded it from the air with my hand, went into the store-room, and shut the door. It certainly was very dark in there, and the lamp gave hardly any light. As I sat in the gloom, I began to wish that I had lived in the days of the ancients. I thought to myself how wonderful it would be if I could be transported back into the ages before any of the marvelous inventions of our day were known. How much I could tell them!

“I wish,” I said to myself, “that I could live in those times for a little while.”

As I spoke I was gently rubbing the edge of the lamp.

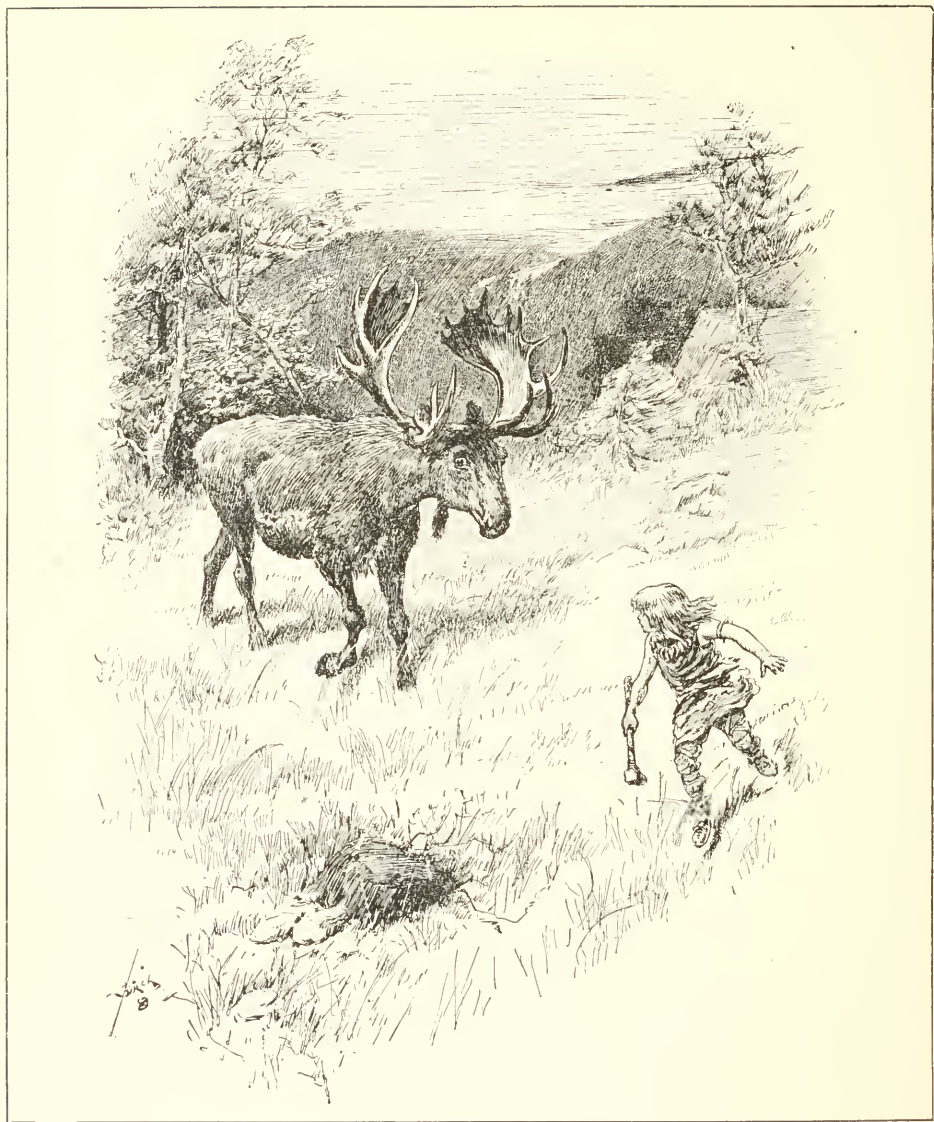
A blue flame sprang up from the wick, there was a muffled explosion, and the room seemed filled with a violet vapor. Then a voice seemed to come from the wreaths of vapor, and it said:

“Master of the lamp, I am here. You shall at once be obeyed.”

Before I could answer, the door opened, the vapor cleared away, and, half dazed, I walked out into the light.

For a few moments I could not make out any of the objects around me. Gradually my sight cleared, and I saw that I was out in the open air and standing upon high ground overlooking a wooded valley through which wound a river. As I looked down wonderingly, I heard a rustling behind me at some distance. I turned, and saw a gigantic elk coming toward me, brandishing a pair of horns that seemed ten feet wide from tip to tip.

Then I knew that my wish had been granted, for I remembered



"I TURNED, AND SAW A GIGANTIC ELK COMING TOWARD ME."

to have read of the ancient Irish elk. I knew I was in the British isles, years before historic times. As I was coming to this conclusion, I was also making rapid progress toward the valley. I found that I was dressed in a short tunic of a dark blue color, and that my legs were covered by loose trousers bound tight with small twisted bands of cloth. Upon my feet were rough shoes of hide. My head was bare and my hair was very long. I carried a club in one hand, and saw that it had a head of sharp stone.

"Why, I 'm a regular 'savage!'" I said to myself, laughingly. The elk had not pursued me far and I soon dropped into a walk, and leisurely made my way into the valley.

I came upon a settlement. It was a collection of huts, made, as I could see from an unfinished one, of willow rods covered with mud and turf. I looked curiously at them, and yet the scene was not unfamiliar to me. All through the time I was there I seemed somehow to be both an ancient and a modern.

Upon entering the road that ran near the groups of huts, I met a man dressed not unlike myself.

"Ah, Anton," he said without the least surprise, "you are back from the hill. Did you see the elk?"

"Yes," I answered. "He came after me. If I had had my gun with me, I would have shot him."

He seemed puzzled by my answer, but only asked, "Where was the elk?"

"Upon the eastern hill," I replied.

"We will go and hunt him," said the man.

We walked together toward one of the largest huts, and entered it. There was a fire upon a block of stone in the middle of the floor, and the smoke drifted out through a hole in the center of the domed roof. Around the fire sat the members of the chief's household: his wife and several children.

The chief sat by the fire fitting a spear-head of stone to a long pole. The wife was making a cord out of some soft bark. The children were playing with sticks and stones, and one of the girls had a rude doll. We did not talk English, of course, but I understood them and they understood me. What language we used I don't know.

The chief questioned me about the elk, and I told him all I knew.

"Come!" he said, and strode out of the hut, calling upon several other men to take part in the hunt. I went with them, out of curiosity.

To my surprise, they had no other weapons than rude clubs with stone heads, and sharp sticks the ends of which had been hardened by charring in fire. They surrounded the elk and killed it, but not without a fierce struggle. Several of them were severely hurt by the sharp horns.

On my way back to the village, I walked beside the chief. We fell into conversation and I explained to him my astonishment at their rude clubs and spears.

"If you had a rifle," I said, "you could shoot the elk without needing to go near him."

"A rifle?" he inquired. "What is that? I have heard of a queer weapon made of a stick and a cord, and I believe that it can kill from a distance. But I do not know how it is made."

"You mean a bow and arrow," I said, laughing. "Why, they are nothing to a rifle. If I had a rifle, I could stand off further than a bow can send, and yet reach a man with ease."

"This sounds like magic," the chief said, cautiously drawing a little away from me.

"It is not magic," I answered; "it is only that I know more than your people."

"But your beard is not yet to be seen," answered the chief, smiling indulgently as one might at a foolish child.

I saw that sooner or later I must explain how I knew more than the men of his time, and so I told him as much of my story as I thought he could understand.

"So you see," I said, in conclusion, "I am really one of your remote descendants."

"You tell a marvelous story," the chief declared; "and if it be also a true one, you may be a great help to my people. Come to my hut and I will talk with you of the things that should be done. If you can advise me well you shall be my chief counselor—even before your beard grows."

After we had eaten some of the meat of the elk, I went into the chief's hut and he bade me sit down near the fire. The smoke was very thick.

"This is all wrong," I said. "You should have a chimney." Then I explained to him how the hot air was light and would carry off the smoke through a chimney.

"It would be good," he replied, "to have less smoke. But we could not take time to build such a contrivance as you speak of. Game so soon becomes scarce that we have to move our houses to a new place very often. We could not build those stone chimneys so often. Besides, if there was no hole in the roof, the hut would be dark."

"You must cut a hole in the side of the hut."

"It would be too cold at night," he answered.

"But we do not leave the hole open. We fill it with something hard and like ice. We call it 'glass.'"

"And how can it be had?"

"It is made," I said, "of sand and of—of soda, I think."

"Sand I know," said the chief; "but what is soda?"

"Maybe it's potash," I suggested.

"I never heard of that either," said the chief, with a smile I did n't like. "But what is it?"

"Well," I said at last, rather shamefacedly, "I 'm not a glass-worker. I don't know how to make it. I 'm sorry."

The chief said nothing, but looked at me with a faint smile. I thought it best to change the subject.

"Talking of guns — rifles," I said, "it would be splendid if you had one. They are made of steel, which is hardened iron, you know, and then loaded with powder. A lead bullet is put over the powder and then when the powder explodes, the bullet, or round piece of lead, is driven — oh, ever so far — a thousand paces!"

"But I do not know these things," said the chief; and I noticed that he spoke soothingly, as one might to a child whose mind was disordered. "You speak of iron, of steel, of lead, and of powder. What are they?"

"It is hard for me to explain," I said, "because you know so little. Iron is a hard substance melted out of certain rocks. When that is treated in some way it becomes steel. Lead is another substance of the same kind, but much softer."

"Can you show us how to find or to make these things?" the old chief asked. "We may be very ignorant, but we can learn."

I was silent for a few moments. I had never seen any iron ore and I had not the least idea how to get iron out of the rock, even if I had the ore. As for steel, I knew it had carbon in it, but how it was put in or left in I did n't know.

"To tell the truth," I replied, "I don't know much about them myself. And as for gunpowder, I think it is made of charcoal."

"Good!" broke in the chief, "I know charcoal."

"And — and saltpeter, I believe, and something else," I went on weakly. "But I don't know what saltpeter is, I 'm sure."

"I don't see how we can do anything with the little you know," said the chief, kindly. "You tell me strange stories, but there seems to be nothing practical about your knowledge."



ANTHONY MAKES THE CANDLE

I could not deny that he was right. I began to think over some of our modern improvements, and luckily thought of a candle. So I explained to him how candles were made of tallow, by dipping a string into the melted tallow. Nothing would satisfy him but an immediate trial. To my great triumph I succeeded in making a tolerable candle out of some animal fat. The chief was delighted.

"That," said he, "is a great invention. You indeed are fortunate people. We have only torches."

"But we don't use candles," I said; "we have gas, and kerosene-lamps, and the electric light. But I can't make any of those for you. I don't know where to find coal or oil, or how to make electricity, or an electric light."

"No matter," he said cheerfully; "this is quite enough. I see there is some truth in your story. Tell me more of your marvels."

"Well," I said, "we use the steam-engine for traveling. We heat water over the fire, and a vapor or steam comes from it, and we let the steam go into a box, and it pushes a wheel around, and that pushes other wheels. That's the way we travel."

"Can you make a steam-engine?"

"No-o," I said. "I'm afraid I don't quite understand it."

"Well, what else?" the chief asked patiently.

"How do you tell time?" I inquired.

"By the sun," he replied. "Have you a better way?"

"We have machines to tell time for us."

"Indeed!" he said wonderingly.

"Yes," I said. "There is a piece of metal coiled up, and that pushes around some wheels, and they push other wheels that move two flat pieces and make them point to marks that mean the hours."

"Do you know how they work?"

"Not exactly," I said; "though I have a general idea."

"We might find these hard substances you call metals," said the

chief thoughtfully; "for I have seen bits of hard substance come from the rocks of our fireplaces. But I fear you could not teach us to make these wonderful machines."

"I 'm afraid I could n't," I replied, regretfully.

"There 's one thing I want to ask you," the chief said eagerly; "and that is about the tides. Sometimes the water is high and then it is low. Do you know what makes the tides?"

Now that was a question I ought to have been able to answer. I knew it had something to do with the moon, and faint memories of the words perigee and apogee came into my mind. But so vague were my ideas that I could n't make it clear to myself, and so I thought it wise to tell the plain truth. I said I did n't know.

"At times the sun turns black," said the chief. "Why is that?"

"The moon gets in front of it," I answered, glad of an opportunity to make any kind of a reply.

"But the moon is n't black," he said.

"No, but it looks so," I said. "The moon has no light of her own. She looks bright only because the sun lights her."

"We know that," he said, "for the light on the edge of the moon is always toward the sun. But how often does the sun turn black?"

"I don't know," I was forced to confess.

"Why does n't it happen oftener?"

This was worse than a school examination. I made up my mind to end it.

"Chief," I said, "if I have not shown learning, at least I have learned my own ignorance. I am going to go back to my own time, if I can (and I think I can, for my wish was only to stay a while), and when I *do* get back there I 'm going to know some of those things you asked me about. I 'm going to know them all through. Then, if I can, I 'm going to come back and teach you many things."

"I wish you good fortune," said the chief, "for this candle you have made is a great thing—a great invention."

"Farewell," I said.

Then I turned and climbed the eastern hill, where I had seen the elk. Just as I came to the crest of the hill a stone gave way beneath my feet, and I went tumbling—tumbling—tumbling—down into the store-room of the museum, where I woke up.

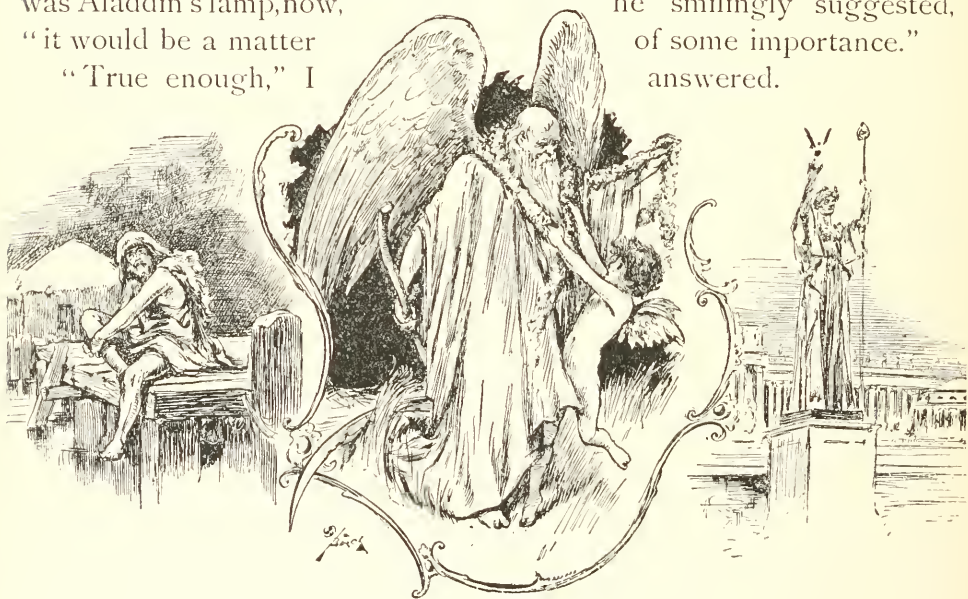
"I forgot all about you!" said the voice of the museum attendant. "You must have been asleep."

"I think so. I had a strange dream," I said. Then I looked at the lamp. It was broken. "I have broken the lamp," I added.

"No matter," he replied. "It is only one of a common kind. If it was Aladdin's lamp, now," he smilingly suggested, "it would be a matter of some importance."

"True enough," I

answered.





IN the blue shadow of the Life-Saving Station sat Sailor Ben painting a toy boat. He ran a red stripe around the hull. "That brightens her a bit," remarked Sailor Ben. "I hopes the little lad will like her. Anyhow, she 's wuth the half-dollar—every cent."

"That 's gay!" said a small boy in a sailor-suit, who just then came down the board walk from the hotel. "She 'll scoot along, won't she?"

"Sure-ly," answered Sailor Ben, solemnly; "she can't help herself. She 's the model image of the 'Speedy Susan,' and that was the slickest little brig I ever see point forefoot toward blue water."

"Was she wrecked?" asked the boy.

"O' course she were," answered the old sailor. "She were bound to be—always sailing smack up ag'in' all the coral reefs she could find. She was tradin' in the South Pacific, and she had

a fancy for coral reefs. She could n't keep clear of 'em. We hauled her off a matter of a dozen times, but it was n't no sort o' use. She 'd made up her mind to be wrecked — and wrecked she were, on the Tapioca Islands."



"‘SHE ’S THE MODEL IMAGE OF THE SPEEDY SUSAN,’ SAID SAILOR BEN."

"Tapioca?" the boy asked, smiling doubtfully.

"Tapioca is what we called 'em. It may 'a' been Tappy-appy-oca or Tapioca-oca, but it don't signify. That ain't the point. The

point is here: How did the Cook and the Bo's'n—that was me—get away from the cannibal savages?" asked Sailor Ben, very impressively. "You might read your 'Swiss Family Crusoe' forty times without comin' within forty fathom of guessin' that little riddle."

"Tell me about it," said the boy eagerly.

"Are you sure you can lie by while I 'm tellin' it? I don't like to have you signaled for just as I get all sail drawin'."

"I can wait for half an hour," the boy answered. "They 've all gone in bathing."

"Then put a stopper on that little chatterbox, open both your hearin'-ports, and—don't believe all an old sailor tells you when he 's spinnin' yarns to a little landlubber," said Sailor Ben, with a good-natured chuckle. "Here 's the way it goes:"

As I remarked in the start, the Speedy Susan wrecked herself off the Tappy-appy-oca Islands in the South Pacific. I was a green youngster then, but with the makin's of a sailor about me. After the brig bumped coral and filled, she thought she 'd make a call on Mr. Davy Jones. Not havin' been invited, I made up my mind to stay above water as long as I could.

"Come," says I to the Cook, "you and me ain't captains o' this ungrateful craft. Our betters may go down in glory with the ship, but bo's'ns and cooks can't be spared like officers, and swimmin' ashore is all we 're good for."

The Cook was a level-headed kind of a darky,—he made the best plum-duff I ever see,—and he says: "All right, sah." So over we went like a couple o' flying-fish, and come up like two porpoises. But it was a powerful stretch to swim, bein' a matter o' forty mile or so; and I mistrust whether we might n't 'a' joined Mr. D. Jones's party down below if it had n't been for the Bo's'n (me).

When I heard Snowball (the Cook, you mind) puffing grampus-fashion, I says to him, says I:

"Snowball, you sunburnt sea-cook, float on your back and I 'll tow you a bit." So he did, and I grappled his wool and towed him as easy as if he were the Lord Mayor o' London in his kerridge. When I began to puff like a steam-tug, Snowball played horse for me while I lay baskin' like a lazy whale o' Sunday. So we went—Bo's'n tugging Cook, and Cook repayin' the compliment till we got in soundin's.

I 'm not a-goin' to describe the Tappy-appy Islands. You 've got your Jography, and you can read about 'em any time. The only thing that 's pecooliar about the islands you 'll see as I get along with my facts.

We come ashore in good shape, water-logged, but sound in every timber, and chipper as marines in a ca'm. We had nothin' but our togs to look after, and we set there makin' observations on the weather and the good qualities of our late shipmates, till we had drained off some. Then we begun to talk of explorin' a bit.

We had n't fixed on a plan when somethin' happened that knocked our plans into a cocked hat. Up came a lot of natives rigged out in feathers and things, jabberin' seventeen to the dozen, and maybe more. They surrounded us, and we hauled down our flags without firin' a gun—which we had n't any. They fitted us out with grass-rope bracelets, tied us into two shipshape bits o' cargo, shouldered us, and set sail inland, singin' songs o' triumph'.

"Cook," says I, "we 're a-goin' int' the interior."

"I 'm afeared we be," he pipes up sorrowful enough, thinkin' I meant they was cannibals.

"Avast!" says I. "Men don't sing when they 're hungry."

And I was right. When they got us up to their town, they cast us loose, and gave us free board and fair lodgin's, considerin'—

for you would n't be wantin' electric-bells and bills-o'-fare in such outlandish regions.

Skippin' the months when we was just gettin' acquainted with



“THEY SURROUNDED US, AND WE HAULED DOWN OUR FLAGS WITHOUT FIRIN’ A GUN —
WHICH WE HAD N’T ANY.”

their ways, I ’ll get on to the adventure part. I ’ll say no more than that we lived in clover, till Cook he begun to be homesick. I did n't mind it myself.

"Cook," says I, "it 's a kind of copper-colored vacation when you look at it right—reg'lar rations and nothin' to do."

"It ain't like New Bedford," was all he 'd say; and the same I could n't deny.

But I 'd picked up their lingo till I could convairse fair and free like a genteel Tappyappyocan, passin' the time o' day with the best of 'em. But the Cook was diff'rent; he had a wife and little kids at home, and there was n't any way of hearin' from them. He had been the darkest darky on the islands, but he faded to the shade of a chaplain's every-day coat at the end of a long cruise. I felt sorry for him.

So one day, though I had an invitation to play *tenny-tenny hop-hop*—which, queerly enough, was n't unlike tennis and hop-sotch mixed up together—I politely begged off, and piloted the Cook down to the "sad sea waves" (as I once heard a sweet-singin' young woman remark).

"Cooky," says I, "you are most shockin' pale, and unstiddy upon your pins. Are you land-sick?"

"Ter tell de trufe, sah," says he, pipin' his eye, "I am wantin' powerful to git back ter ole New Bedford; and I don't see dat dese oncivilized colored pussons are goin' ter let us go."

"Well, cheer up," says I; "for I 've calculated a course that ought 'er fetch us clear."

I made out a chart of my idee, and the black Cook he "yah-yahed" till he reminded me of a fancy hyena what I once seen in a cirkis. But it was no wonder.

The way of it was this: the chief of the Tappyappyocans was goin' to give a big blow-out—a regular plum-duff and soft-Tommy spread: plenty o' the best, and charge it to the steward; and he set great store by makin' a show for reasons that I happen to know. That 's what made me think of my plan, and that 's why the Cook grinned.

So back we went to find the chief,—Tiffin, I called him,—and I hailed him till he came out from his hut where he 'd been palaverin' with his chief cook.

"Tiffin," says I, "great Chief of the Tappyappies" (for these benighted heathen likes titles, and has no idee of the glorious off-hand ways of a republic like ours), "you're goin' to give a noble eatin'-match?"

"True, Moonface," says he; for that 's the name I went by, though I was more like a beet in the face than like the moon.

"I s'pose you want things to go off in tip-top style?" I went on as easy as you please.

"You know well, Moonface," says he, his complexion gettin' a shade darker, "that my brother, the chief of the — er — er — Succotash Islands" (that 's where my memory 's not what it should be — I don't rightly remember the Jography name) "is to dine with me, and he has far and away the champion cook o' these parts. Three wars have we fit over that there cook."

"I don't recall mentionin' the fact previously," I remarks, "but Snowball here — *he* 's the boss medicine-man over a galley-stove that I ever saw" (that 's the sense of what I said) — "in fact, he 's the chief cook and first-chop bottle-washer of your pale brothers!"

"Well, well!" says the chief, after a spell, and lookin' at Snowball with int'rest. "You do surprise me."

"Yes, sirree!" I went on, slapping the cook on the shoulder, and 'most keelin' him over. "But to tell you the plain facts o' the case, his heart pants for the land of his people." (These savages delight in poetry talk, and I had picked it up along with their lingo.) "His neck is stretched with gazin' to-wards the land o' the free and the home o' the brave!"

O' course *he* never knew the words was a quotation from a popular ballad, and it moved him — it came so sudden. Still, he

did n't give right in. He saw where I was a-steerin', but did n't choose to let on. So at last I pertended to be a little hurt and huffy.

"All correct," I says; "if Cook and me can't go home to my country 't is of thee, you sha'n't serve up to your dusky friend the



"'IT 'S A GO!' I SAYS, TAKIN' HIM UP RIGHT OFF."

great food of the pale brothers!" And I whistled "Yankee Doodle" slow and solemn, like a hymn tune.

That was too much for him.

"If I might have plenty of this great puddin', I maybe would

let you go," he says, after a long think. "But I 'd like to taste a sample fust."

"It 's a go!" I says, takin' him up right off.

Now, the queer point about these islands was the fact that a humpin' big mount'in rose right in the middle o' the largest one. It was a played-out volcano, and the top of its peak was covered with real snow. That 's what put the notion into my mind first off.

That afternoon me and the Cook climbed that peak and fetched down baskets full of snow and chunks of ice. Then we cut two sections of bamboo—one as big as a water-butt and the other not quite so big. There was plenty of salt along shore, and we toted some to the grove.

The Cook he loaded the littler bamboo nearly to the muzzle with goat's milk, and dumped in a couple o' dozen o' turtle-eggs, and sweetened the mess to taste with sugar-cane juice—and then we fixed on a long bamboo pole to the small cask inside, and round I went as if it was a capstan-bar. Round and *round*, round and *round*! And round, some more—till my back was breakin' with it.

But it froze stiff; and when we fished it out, it was a kind of uncivilized ice-cream. The Cook he tasted it, in the way o' duty; but he looked worser than when he was homesickest.

"No, thanky," says I, when he offered me a dose; "but don't look blue, Cooky. It 'll go down with these heathens—you see if it don't."

It did. You orter 've seen the chief smile when he got some—why, his grin lit up the landscape.

"Moonface Medicine-man," says he, as he scraped the sides o' the bamboo bowl we gave him, "your chill-puddin' is the finest thing I ever saw! Prepare a hundred calabashes for the Chief of the Succotash Islands, and you shall go free. I will make him knock his head to the dust!"

"It 's a bargain, great Chief!" says I, and he marched back to his hut as proud as a new commodore on Sunday. You see, we were careful to give the chief a safe dose, and we fired the rest into the bushes.



"ROUND AND ROUND, ROUND AND ROUND."

Well, just before the great day we set a gang of natives to totin' down snow and ice, cuttin' bamboo for freezers, crushin' sugar-cane, and gatherin' turtle-eggs. We made enough o' the awful

stuff to sink an Indiaman, and left it packed in snow in a cool place in the woods.

The day of the grand barbecue came.

First our chief he put on a poor face, and trotted out regular old played-out native dishes — *bong-bong*, and *maboo-taboo* fried *cush-cush* — common dishes as a third-rate chief might have 'most any day. I see the other chief's lip curlin' up till it most hid his snub-nose — with scorn, and with pride in his own cook. But our chief was just a-leadin' old Succotash on — foolin' him, you see.

Then come dessert. Our chief he remarks careless and easy :

"I have a new dish, royal brother, if you will try it?"

"Don't care if I do," says the other, as if not carin' particular about it.

Our chief he whacked a gong, and in came a string of mahogany slaves proudly supportin' fancy calabashes loaded with that outlandish ice-cream.

"What, may I ask, is this?" asks the royal guest, a trifle oneasy, mistrustin' the other royal humbug was a-savin' his trumps for the last trick.

"Moonface chill-puddin'!" says our chief, impressive and grand.

It was set out, and at the word o' command every noble guest dipped into his calabash. Words o' mine can't describe it. I 'd have to talk French to do it. It was like the finish of a tub-race. When I saw them all a-eatin' fast when they could, and a-tryin' to warm their froze noses when they could n't, I nudged Snowball on the sly.

"Cook," I whispers, "we 'll start now, I guess. Those fellers don't mean to stop as long as they can lift a spoon — and I 'm afraid they 'll overdo this thing. If we waits till dyspepsy sets in, we 'll never see Hail Columbia any more."

He saw the sense o' my remark, and we got out and scooted. I hoped they would n't eat more than human natur' would stand —

but when I thought o' that mixture, my heart kind of rose in my throat.

We did n't get away too early. Our dugout had a start, but soon we made out a war-canoe putting after us.



“‘ADOO, CHIEF!’ I SINGS OUT.”

“Can they overhaul us?” I asks the Cook.

“No, sah!” he says, positive-like, and with a grin. “You jest wait till that p’ison git a fa’r chance!”

And by the time they got within hailin’ distance, most o’ the paddlers had keeled over, one by one, into the hold o’ their canoe.

Then she came to a dead halt. It was just in time, too, for the chief he stood up near the idol they had for a bow, waving his club, and his voice came faint over the water :

"If I catch you, you have to eat your own chill-puddin'! All my people are tumbled over with bad magic!"

"Adoo, Chief!" I sings out. "We was afraid you 'd eat too much!"

He bowled a war-club at us, but he was n't feelin' strong, and then he keeled over; and that was the last of the Tappy-appy-ocas.

"Now, here 's your boat," said Sailor Ben, as he finished his story. "Let her get good and dry, or you 'll be gettin' your clothes mussed up with it."

"Thank you ever so much for the boat, and for the story, too," said the little boy, as he took the new boat daintily by the mast-head.

"I hope," said Sailor Ben, looking after his little friend, and picking up his paint and brushes, "that the little landlubber did n't believe all that nonsense. He seemed rather serious and solemn over it."

THE STATUE

A TRAVELER came to a certain great city, and as he entered through one of its wide gates a passer-by spoke to him. "Welcome, sir," said the citizen. "I saw by your dress that you were a stranger, and make bold to accost you."

"Your welcome is most courteous," answered the traveler, "and I thank you for it."

"You must not fail to see the statue in our market-place," said the citizen. "We take great pride in it, and for my part I consider myself fortunate in being one of the community that owns so fine a work of art and so grand a memorial."

"I shall certainly take pains to see it," answered the traveler, bowing to the citizen as he passed on.

So when the traveler had made his way into the city, he paused for a moment, wondering in which direction the market-place lay. As he stood in doubt, another citizen presented himself, hat in hand.

"You seem unfamiliar with our city," said the new-comer, politely. "If you are seeking the market-place I can easily direct you to it."

"You are right in your supposition," said the traveler.

"Naturally," said the citizen, smiling. "All the world comes to see our great statue; and I have pointed out the way to many. It would be strange if I did not know it, for it was I who proposed the setting up of the statue in the market-place. I am fortunate enough to be one of the town council."

"My respects to you," said the traveler, saluting him.

"Follow this straight course," said the councilman, pointing, "and ask again when you come to the open park."

Bidding the citizen good day, the traveler proceeded upon his way; nor did he pause until he had come to the park. Then, as he had been instructed to do, he made further inquiry at the door of a little shop.

"Yes, indeed, I can tell you," said the woman who came to the door, "for it was my husband who designed the pedestal for it. John!—another stranger to see the statue."

"In a moment," said her husband, from the back of the shop. "How do you do, sir?" he asked, as he greeted the traveler. "Your face seems to me a familiar one. Where have I seen you? Never been here before? Ah, I must have been mistaken. A chance resemblance, no doubt! Turn to the right, and follow this wall, and you will soon reach the statue, for which I designed the pedestal, as the good people of this town will tell you."

The traveler withdrew, and walked leisurely along by the wall. At the first corner he met a workingman who was carving a bit of stonework on a fence-post.

"A stranger, 'sir?" inquired the workman, as the traveler approached. "To see the statue, no doubt?"

"Yes," said the traveler.

"A good bit of work, and well worth your time. Many's the long day I have worked over it. I carved the block, and never did a better bit of work! Turn to the left—but, wait! Here is a man who can show you the way. Henry!"

As he spoke a man who was driving a heavy wagon drew up near the sidewalk.

"Can you show this gentleman the way to the statue?"

"Can I?—when you know well enough that I drew the statue to its place with this very horse and wagon. Come, my friend,

follow me. Or, better still, get up on my wagon and I 'll take you there. You 're lighter than that hewed stone, I warrant!"

So the traveler mounted upon the wagon, and was soon at the market-place, and stood before the statue itself.

As he gazed up at it, another citizen addressed him:

"Admiring the statue, eh? Well, it 's a noble bit of art, and a credit to the place. Every stranger says so."

"It seems well done and well kept," replied the traveler, quietly.

"Well kept? To be sure it is well kept! Would the council of the town have me here if I did n't attend to my duty? Perhaps you don't know that I 'm the custodian of this work of art? No? Well, I am. Yes, you see before you the statue-keeper. It 's a great responsibility; but there, there!—the townspeople don't complain, so I suppose my work is not so badly done."

"Who is it?" asked the traveler.

"Oh, I forget," said the man, unconcernedly. "Maybe I 've heard the name; but I 've forgotten it long since."

The traveler thanked the fellow and gave him a silver coin. Then he departed from out the city. But as he went through the gate in the city wall, there was a boy playing marbles near by, for now the school-hours were over. And as the traveler passed him, the boy looked to see whose shadow fell upon the wall; and then the boy sprang to his feet, and said:

"See! see! 'T is he—the man whose statue stands in the market-place!"

And so it was; but none else in the city knew anything beyond their stone image of the man.

"You were asleep and dreaming in the sun!" the people said, when the boy told his story. And as the traveler never came again, even the boy himself began as he grew older to think it was a dream, so real seemed the statue compared to his faint memory of the great one in whose honor it stood aloft.

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